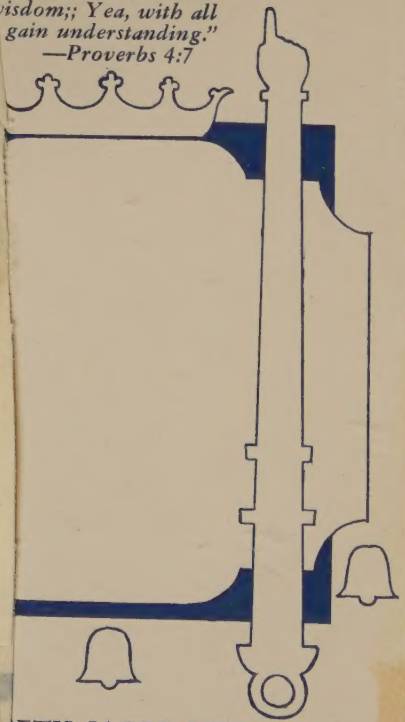
inning of wisdom is:
visdom;; Yea, with all
gain understanding."
—Proverbs 4:7



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The "Judengasse"

JEWISH COMMUNITIES SERIES

FRANKFORT

BY

A. FREIMANN AND F. KRACAUER

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN MANUSCRIPT

BY

BERTHA SZOLD LEVIN

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CHAPTER I

EARLIEST TIMES TO THE SECOND MASSACRE

As early as the period of the destruction of the Temple in the Holy Land, it may be assumed, individual Jews, in the wake of the Roman armies, had found their way to Germany. Certainly in the days of the Romans Jews had reached the lands along the Rhine, and inhabited Cologne, Mayence, Speyer, Worms, and Treves. For this reason it seems at first glance surprising that Frankfort—a town of some note under the Carolingians—harbored no Jewish community until well into the twelfth century. Although it was the capital of the East Frankish Empire as early as 876, it lay apart from the world trade routes of the time, agriculture and stock-farming being its only important industries. Therefore there was nothing to induce the Jews, who, under the Saxon and Franconian rulers, were the chief wholesale traders of the time, to settle in Frankfort permanently. About the middle of the twelfth century the name Frankfort first appears in a Jewish source, from which we learn that there was a small number of Jews there. They were so well off that neither alms nor a charitable organization was needed. Christian sources first mention a permanent settlement of Jews in Frankfort about the end of the twelfth century. By the beginning of the thirteenth century the Frankfort community made quite a respectable showing. Thus, at that time, one of the

most eminent Jewish savants of the Middle Ages, Rabbi Simon ha-Darshan (the Preacher) sojourned among them. He was the compiler of the *Yalkut*, a collection of the haggadic interpretations of the Holy Writ found in the Talmud and in the Midrashim.

In 1241 the Jews of Frankfort first appear plainly in the light of history in a way only too typical of their thorny future. In that year occurred the first massacre of the Jews—a pogrom due not at all to economic causes but to superstition, anxiety, and despair. It was the time when the flood of Mongols from Hungary and Poland was pouring itself over Germany, and there was no strong force to stem it. The terrified folk sought a connection between the Jews and the Mongols, whom people frequently regarded as a remnant of the ten lost tribes, now driven from their abodes as forerunners of the Day of Judgment. They even accused the Jews of secretly helping the Mongols with weapons and supplies. Contemporaries found proof of their suspicion in the prevalence among the Jews of an obvious spirit of joy. The latter in fact at that time expected a complete subversion of the existing order with the speedy coming of the Messiah, as is evidenced in the works of Jewish writers of the day. The onrushing Mongols might be his heralds. And upon what were these hopes based? Upon a chronological play on numbers. As Christendom had feared the end of the world in the year 1000, so did the year 5000 according to the Jewish reckoning of time (corresponding approximately to the year 1240) raise expectations of something extraordinary.

And indeed something extraordinary did occur. Open warfare against the Jews on the most trivial of occasions. In Frankfort on May 29, 1241, there was a bloody conflict. The primary cause of this is not indubitably fixed—it appears that the fight turned about a Jew, who wanted to receive baptism, while his family tried to hinder him. The exchange of words turned into acts which developed into a two-day battle. The doors of the Jews' houses were knocked in with axes and the inmates met death in many forms; some were stabbed or shot with arrows, others were stoned or drowned. Many set their houses afire themselves and were consumed along with them. All who did not accept baptism were straightway murdered. At that time the community numbered two hundred souls. Some foreign Jews, too, including a few French students, met their death in this massacre.

After the bloody carouse of the terrible May days had evaporated and quiet and self-possession had been restored to their disturbed spirits, the people of Frankfort may well have felt anxiety as to the punishment which the Emperor, Frederick II, the Hohenstaufen, would visit on the city. The Hohenstaufen Emperors had hitherto always avenged open crimes against the Jews. But Frederick was lingering in Italy; his weak representative in Germany, Conrad, let the matter rest; not a hair of any Frankfort citizen was touched, a policy certainly not calculated to scare people off from massacres of Jews.

In spite of the frightful end of the first community, only a few years later Jews were again settling in the

city. Perhaps what attracted them was the ever increasing success of the fairs, with the possibility they provided of making much money at all kinds of trade. For about a hundred years they lived completely undisturbed, in tolerable relations with the other citizens of the city on the Main, the Council protecting them as far as possible. This was indeed necessary, for along the Rhine religious fanaticism perpetrated veritable orgies. Although Pope Innocent IV had issued a bull in July 1247 in which he condemned as a wicked invention the accusation that Jews partook of the heart of a Christian boy at Passover, nevertheless the blood-accusations would not down. Murder and robbery were their consequences. The Council, however, succeeded in suppressing these superstitions in Frankfort. We may indeed infer that the Frankfort Jews felt tolerably secure because none of them were among the large number, particularly from the Rhineland, who, tired of perpetual persecutions, were leaving house and home in Germany to seek Palestine. In fact, they had not yet taken that position as pariahs in the life of the community which was theirs later in the Middle Ages. This showed itself even when a Jew sought admission to the city. He was treated just as Christians were. First he had to pay a citizen's tax of three pounds of hellers, and then within a month he had to acquire a rental of the value of one half mark yearly on some house or piece of ground. With these payments he had bought the right of citizenship, and his name, like those of the Christian inhabitants, was entered on the city register, indeed

on the same pages. Moreover, it was not forbidden Jews to acquire land; they owned houses, as well as fields and vineyards, which, however, they seldom cultivated themselves.

Nevertheless it would be a mistake to believe that the Jews at that time occupied German soil as freemen. They stood rather in the relation of serfs of the chamber to the reigning Emperor. As "serfs" of the Imperial chamber they were not allowed to leave the Empire without the permission of the overlord; they were bound to German soil. This legal relationship was established gradually; under Rudolph I it was completely developed. His successors interpreted the serfdom more strictly. Under Louis the Bavarian the Jews appear virtually without rights. Acts of violence against them he extenuated according to the principle: "You belong to us body and goods. We may act toward you, do to you, and treat you as we will and as seems well to us." The Jews, then, had become nothing more than an Imperial prerogative like mines, tolls, etc., and indeed a very profitable one. A policy consistent with this attitude was pursued toward them. Since the German Emperors were in continuous need of money and had long been dissipating valuable Imperial property, the taxes from the Jews were by this time their strongest reserve. With them they enfeoffed old followers to prove themselves grateful, or they tried to win new ones; they pledged them and redeemed them—which last they once forgot and so produced hopeless confusion and endless quarrels. On their part when those enfeoffed were in need of

money they pledged the income from the Jews further so that the most remarkable transactions resulted. It was by no means displeasing to see the Jews grow rich, to see them sucking themselves full like sponges; there was all the more to squeeze out of them.

The Imperial tax on the Jews was imposed not on individuals but on the community as a whole. We do not know whether the total sum which was divided among the individual taxpayers was fixed solely by the Imperial Treasury or was determined after previous consultation with the Jews. The latter is more nearly in accord with mediaeval usage. The tax rose or fell with the growth or diminution of the community. If the Jews of Frankfort had to pay at the same rate as those of Friedberg, of whom we have exact information, the tax rate was only about two per cent of their property. Therefore the enormous increase of the Imperial tax of the Jews of Frankfort at the end of the thirteenth century may be taken as proof that the well-being of the community as well as its numbers had increased considerably.

The sources of those days mention not only the Imperial tax but also the Jewish tithe, which gave rise to many a dispute. However, this term does not imply an extra tax but just the tenth part of the Imperial tax, on which when the Emperor was abroad the Archbishop of Mayence, as "Protector of the Jews," had a claim. Not that this tax had always been paid to the Archbishopric unhesitatingly. The Emperor had very often tried to turn it over to

others or to realize a profit from it in some way or other. But during the last thirty years before the "second massacre of the Jews" the Archbishopric of Mayence had been regularly receiving its tax of 840 pounds of hellers from the Jewish community of Frankfort.

Besides the tribute to the Emperor and the Empire Frankfort Jewry had also to pay taxes to the city and the community. In itself not one of these taxes was unreasonably high, though altogether they may have been burdensome enough. But there must have been in addition to these obligations, others, unknown to us, or else severe property losses, for at the beginning of the fourteenth century we find the Frankfort community in such serious financial straits that it negotiated a rather large loan from the Frankfort burghers. Various pieces of real estate belonging to the community served as security. Manifestly, well-being and hard times alternated rapidly with the Jews of Frankfort.

A further Jewish tax was introduced by Louis the Bavarian towards the end of his reign—the "güldener Opferpfennig" (golden sacrificial penny). This tribute was not a collective tax, like the one mentioned above, but a poll tax. Every Jew and every Jewess that had passed the twelfth year of age and had means amounting to twenty gulden had to pay one gulden yearly. Thus Louis found ways and means of renewing the Imperial serfdom of the Jews, which, through loans to princes and Imperial cities had become largely illusory, and created new sources of income for the Imperial exchequer which could in

turn be loaned and pledged. The first mention that the Jews of Frankfort had paid the Opferpfennig occurred in 1346. Unfortunately the amount is not given, which is much to be regretted, as we could thereby calculate the strength of the community.

In spite of the new burden that Louis imposed on the Jews of the Empire, including those of Frankfort, he cannot be called an enemy of the Jews. He regarded himself as their protector, less, it is true, for humanitarian than for financial reasons. In general he was a friend of the cities and fostered their growth, and he had a special preference for Frankfort. This favorable attitude toward the city he extended to the Jews within its walls, who stood nearer to him than the other Jews of the Empire, even than those in his hereditary domains. It is, at all events, a striking circumstance that in the distinguished list of Jewish communities which Louis, in the course of his long reign, pledged or bought—among them the communities of Regensburg, Strassburg, Speyer and Worms, Würzburg, Rothenburg, etc.—the name of Frankfort is not found. He conferred effective protection upon the Frankfort Jews in the years 1336 and 1337.

At that time the Jews in Alsace, on the Rhine, and in southwestern Germany were undergoing a fearful persecution. Two noblemen who were called King Leatherarms from the leather that was bound around their arms, at the head of a crowd of more than five thousand armed peasants, fell upon the Jewish communities in their way, robbing and murdering, ostensibly to avenge the death of Christ with their

blood. Then Louis enjoined the most powerful feudal lords in the vicinity of Frankfort, the Count of Hanau and Herr von Eppstein, not to admit the Jew-beaters—the name for the Leatherarm bands—into the city. Finally the whole uprising was suppressed and one of the Leatherarms was caught and executed.

When Louis the Bavarian died unexpectedly, October 11, 1347, the Frankfort community may well have received the news with unfeigned sorrow. At any rate there soon came times when they remembered him with yearning and regret.

Louis was succeeded by his opponent, Charles of Luxemburg, King of Bohemia, who had been crowned as rival King at Bonn in 1346, without, however, having found much support. Even after Louis' death the choice of Charles did not at once find general acceptance; the Bavarian party, to which the southwestern cities, including Frankfort, belonged, raised Günther of Schwarzburg upon their shield. Civil war nearly ensued, but Charles was not a man of heroic deeds; he knew that dealings on a gold basis were better and more effectual than armed force. And so he succeeded in checkmating the opposing party and in securing general recognition as ruler. But his heart, if he can be said to have had one, beat only for his hereditary lands. He had raised Bohemia to a flourishing economic condition, but he remained inwardly a stranger to the German Empire and troubled himself little about it.

From the middle of June till July 10, 1349, Charles IV sojourned in Frankfort, and this stay is very

important and consequential for the legal status of the Jews of that town. Charles was in great need of money, having spent large sums to satisfy his opponents and for the expenses of his coronation. He therefore relinquished to the city his serfs of the chamber, the Jews, together with all their private and communal possessions for about 15,000 pounds of hellers. The Jews themselves were not consulted about this deal. Thus the policy of the Frankfort Council, which it pursued persistently and successfully throughout the whole of the fourteenth century, came another step nearer its goal. This goal was to secure for the city, if possible, all the Imperial prerogatives that bore upon its territory in order to become to an increasing degree its own unlimited sovereign.

The significance of this compact for the later history of the Jews of Frankfort justifies us in spending a moment upon it. In any case it is important to stress that in this arrangement, which came into effect on July 25, 1349, the Emperor handed over to the city his serfs of the chamber in Frankfort without exception with all their immovables, profits, services, and dues, until their redemption through him or his successors. Furthermore he promised the Jews not to exact any sort of tax with the exception, specified in the contract, of the tribute to the Archbishopric of Mayence and Herr von Eppstein. Henceforth they need only supply the Emperor, when he happened to be staying in the city, with parchment for his office, beds for his court, and kettles for his kitchen. For the Council, one of the most important provisions of

the contract was that from now on it was to have exclusive judicial authority over its Jews, who might no longer be summoned before a foreign court, temporal or spiritual. That is to say, whoever had a complaint against them could bring his case only before the Frankfort tribunal of elders. On the other hand, one matter of great importance was not touched in the exceedingly voluminous and long-winded document—the payment of the golden penny. The lack of a binding clause on this matter was an oversight on the part of the city that was later to avenge itself bitterly. The close of the document is very characteristic. In it Charles promises not to call either the Council or the citizens of Frankfort to account in case the Jews "died or were ruined or slain or carried off." On the contrary, after the downfall of the Jews the city was to have the right to buy or remove all their possessions until they had redeemed the sums paid as a pledge, the extra proceeds going to the Empire.

The Emperor knew full well what he meant by this promise. He reached similar agreements with various states of the Empire at the time. He also knew perfectly that ownership of Jews was then a very insecure capital investment. For the bands of Flagellants, who were known everywhere as Jew-beaters, had already started on their course.

In the year 1348 the sect of Flagellants first arose in Austria. Filled with gruesome fascination and sensual horror people beheld the tortures of these men, who afflicted themselves and sang gloomy penitential hymns as they went from land to land. So

powerful was the suggestiveness of the phenomenon that in an inconceivably short time Flagellantism became an illness of the masses, an epidemic disease that flared up in all parts of Germany. How could such a movement arise? We have little definite knowledge about it. Perhaps people had learned that a fearful disease had spread in eastern countries, destroying multitudes; perhaps they hoped through severe castigation and penance to hold off from their own hearth and home the destroying angel, the Black Death, as they called the plague. In any case religious fanaticism, from which the movement was born, soon amalgamated with economic motives. Both tendencies pointed to one and the same mark, the Jews, those godless people who had crucified the Saviour but who also were in possession of wealth and debtors' notes. Thus to kill and rob the Jews was not only a godly but also a profitable act.

When presently the Black Death did make its way into Europe and, proceeding from Upper Italy and France, visited Germany too, it soon became a firm belief of the excited, despairing populace that the Jews had caused the pestilence by poisoning wells. The Flagellant brothers stirred up hatred everywhere, and in many places in the west and south of Germany people began to murder the Jews and plunder their homes. On May 2, 1349, the Flagellants made their entry into Würzburg; their goal was obviously Frankfort. On July 24, very shortly after the Emperor's departure and the completion of the deed pledging the Jews to the Council, the Flagellants appeared before the gates of the city on the Main.

The Jews did not at once give themselves up to despair. They hoped, indeed, to escape the threatened ruin, for the Council seemed to be considering serious resistance. At all events it had taken a few measures of defense. But bitterly was this hope extinguished. The fanatical bands pressed into the city without meeting opposition, and at once rushed upon the Jewish quarter, which at that time lay near the Church of Saint Bartholomew, the principal church of the city. The frightful events that occurred have not been handed down to us in a thoroughly trustworthy account. Jewish sources do not exist at all; contemporary Christian sources are extremely scant. The only information they really give is that, just as on the occasion of the first massacre, the Jews in their despair set fire to their houses and burnt themselves in their own homes, and that even the roof of the Church of Saint Bartholomew caught fire and was burnt, and that the church altogether suffered great damage.

The more recent the sources, the more detailed they are in their description of the events and of course the more untrustworthy they are. Especially noteworthy is a biassed report from the second half of the fifteenth century. The writer professes to know that the citizens had tried to ward off the Flagellants, and at the clanging of the bells had hurried to the assistance of the Jews. A bitter fight had ensued, in the course of which it is true many Jews had fallen, but the citizens had been victorious and had rescued a large part of the Jews. The latter, however, had believed that the citizens had had a secret

understanding with the Flagellants and therefore decided to destroy the whole city. One of the most respected Jews, named Storch after the house in which he lived, had hurled a firebrand upon the Rathaus, which had at once caught fire and had set the western part of the Church of Saint Bartholomew in flames. Embittered by this shameful treachery the citizens had fallen upon the Jews and had massacred them.

On topographical grounds alone, which we need not go into here, it is clear that this description is shot through with falsehood. One fact at least is established; on that tragic day the Frankfort Jewish community came much nearer to complete destruction than in the blood bath of the year 1241, when at least a small number succeeded in saving their lives through baptism. This time, however, the embitterment was so great that the few to whom life was dearer than faith were not admitted to baptism. The number of Jews and Jewesses killed cannot be determined. A late source asserts that under the protection of night individuals escaped and fled to Bohemia.

CHAPTER II

TO KING WENZEL'S REMISSION OF DEBT

PASSION subsided and gave way to reflection. Then, when people beheld the charred ruins where had stood the homes of their Jews, their chief feeling must have been that they had made a bad business of the privilege of having Jews, so dearly bought barely four weeks before. It was probably in the main financial considerations that moved the Council at the beginning of August to send an envoy to Charles IV to speak with him "concerning the Jews." The city, it was thought, could not possibly be held to account for the murder of the Jews, which indeed it had not brought about, but which it had not taken enough pains to prevent. The possibility had been considered in the documentary pledge, and impunity had been assured. What terms the Emperor and the envoy agreed upon is not known; but the city took possession of such goods of the Jews as had been spared by looting and fire. There was more than might have been expected, the value being set at 7,507 pounds of hellers. The Council considered itself heir to the dead Jews to the extent that it tried to collect the claims due from various debtors. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the city claimed the ground on which the Jewish homes had stood, and had it fenced in. Individual lots were offered for sale, and sold readily, for the

Jews had not had a separate quarter, but had lived intermingled with the Christians near the Main in the busiest and best part of the city. Through the unwelcome intervention of a third group this real estate business was interrupted. In the course of time there appeared a whole series of religious houses, knights, and gentlemen who claimed title to the land or to the revenues and rents from it. It was hard for the harassed city government to come to an understanding with all these interests, which were far from being united among themselves, and many of which could base their claims on the fact that the Emperor himself had favored them with a Jewish plot of ground. The occasion had come to remind him that he had promised the Jews with all their property only to the city of Frankfort. A gift of 1500 marks weighted the arguments sufficiently, and the Council received a new confirmation of the documentary pledge together with the express promise that no one else might dispose of the houses and lots of the Jews. The Emperor did not keep his word. As a reward for services rendered, he invested Count Ulrich von Hanau with Jewish homesteads. This claim against the city could no more be evaded than that of the Archbishop of Mayence on account of the tax from the Jews that he had lost. The city needed powerful foreign patrons at a time when there were internal feuds with the guilds, which were demanding a greater share than formerly in the city government. There was nothing for the Council to do then but acknowledge itself as the heir also of the liabilities of the murdered Jews.

There was thus imposed upon the city a Jewish debt, not a very considerable one, which was not balanced by corresponding revenues. What was more natural than that the wish should spring up in the city fathers to have Jews again? The wish was the more comprehensible since the city was involved in all manner of feuds with neighboring princes, which forced it to maintain large troops of cavalry at great expense. If it again had Jews within its walls, then it would be sure of a richly flowing source of money. It was not that the Jews' taxes would bring in so much, but Jews could not be dispensed with as persons ever ready to provide money.

In the early Middle Ages, when commerce in Germany was still in its infancy, the Jews were the wholesale dealers and distributers. Their activity in this field was regarded by the Saxon Emperors, for example, as so useful that they forbade tolls to be taken from Jews. At the time of the Crusades, when the German cities grew strong and enabled an efficient middle and laboring class to flourish in their midst, the position of the Jews rapidly sank to that of money-lenders, and, consequently, of old clothes dealers. The craftsmen and tradesmen just beginning to flourish were absolutely opposed to having energetic Jews as their competitors.

Together with the growth of cities, the economic situation itself began to change, and the transition was made from barter to money economy. People began to be in need of credit, but the rules of the Church were opposed to the lending of money at interest. Ever since the monasteries had begun to

lend money at usurious rates, when they should have made loans as an act of charitable relief and mercy, the Popes had forbidden all Christians to lend at interest. The Jews, however, were doomed to Hell at any rate, because they denied the cardinal truths of Christianity, and so they were allowed, indeed compelled, to pursue this business. If a city admitted Jews it was always only on condition that they would bind themselves to lend money at interest. Naturally, the urgent need that was felt of them did not prevent bitter hatred of the Jews as parasites. The per cent of interest allowed seems high even according to our ideas. In Frankfort natives might be charged 21 per cent, foreigners as much as 43 per cent. In many cases interest on interest was charged, and was not forbidden till the fifteenth century. Credit was mostly for short-time loans, and a large premium was included for risk. The Jews were practically without rights. The authorities could tax and bleed them at pleasure. If for any reason they were no longer wanted, they might be expelled. They might indeed, as we have seen, be killed, even though they were not expecting any special penalty. These evil possibilities were taken into account at the outset. Owing to the insufficient security for the creditor, lending on personal credit rarely took place. Loans were made either on pledge or on notes with security. If the debt was not paid when due, then the creditor had the right to sell the pledge; but the custom developed of waiting a full year beyond the date when the debt was due. The net profits fell to the share of the debtor; in case of loss he had to cover

the deficit. It was considered bad business ethics to make use of the pledges deposited because the wear and tear would diminish their value. The value of the pledge varied with the extent of the loan. The law forbade the pledging of certain articles, though legislation in respect to this differed according to time and place. In comparison with restrictions in other parts of Germany the Frankfort Jews had free play. Originally they were forbidden to take as pledges only three kinds of articles—priests' vestments, and wet and bloody clothes, because to these three clung the suspicion of crime. It is surprising that we often find Christian ceremonial objects mentioned among the pledges, especially prayerbooks and rosaries, in spite of the fact that early councils had forbidden this and that the synods of rabbis too, knowing with what danger the practice was fraught for the Jews, had prohibited the taking of such pledges under penalty of excommunication. Not till the end of the fourteenth century were decreed all kinds of restrictions in regard to pledges. But in general there was hardly any kind of property that did not find its way to the Jews as a pledge, from the simplest household utensils, such as wooden beakers and bowls, to the costliest jewels and the most magnificent raiment. Grain, wine, and meal were frequently pawned. One other class of pawned objects should be mentioned, the so-called feeding pledges, that is, animals. Horses were pawned as well as cows and calves, less often sheep and wethers. Here and there even fowls are mentioned. The debtor, of course, had to pay for the fodder. Often the lender

sought security by having the income from a piece of property assigned to him and drawing the rent, which in an early period, when barter had not been completely superseded, was often paid in corn instead of money. In the case of large loans plots of ground were pledged to the creditor. In general, loans on pledges were made only up to half their value.

Loans on promissory notes occur less often than on pawned objects. This was natural because, if the debtor did not pay, the creditor could keep the pledge, which was in fact in his possession. It was hard to collect what was due on promissory notes on account of the uncertainty of justice for the Jews when they lived in a hostile world, and the cry of unbearable Jewish usury rang out whenever Jews tried to proceed energetically against their debtors. Business with promissory notes took place mostly in the case of big deals and transactions with solvent debtors, high lords, noblemen or well-to-do citizens. Sometimes whole cities and villages borrowed from the Frankfort Jews. Church dignitaries up to the highest ecclesiastical prince of the vicinity, the Archbishop of Mayence, likewise belonged to the steady circle of customers of the Frankfort community. These brief explanations make clear what sort of rôle the Jews filled in the economic life of the city, and why it must have been of consequence not only to the Council but also to wide circles of citizens to induce the Jews to return to the city. The only question was what attitude the Emperor would take. At this particular time he was not miserly with privileges to cities and princes who wanted to keep

Jews in their territory. So the city of Frankfort was allowed, on June 13, 1360, "out of inborn mildness" to "attract Jews again, man and wife, to itself, and come to an agreement with them about the yearly rate of interest." The conditions upon which the Emperor permitted them in Frankfort did not fully satisfy the Council. It was recognized as the sole authority over its Jews insofar as it alone should have the right to proclaim laws and ordinances for them, from which later the so-called *Stättigkeiten** developed. But what was just as important was that in spite of the well-known charter the tax resources of the Jews were again to be made accessible to the royal treasury. The Jews were again to become the Emperor's serfs of the chamber.

Soon after the city had acquired the renewal of its right to have Jews, Jewish families seem to have moved to Frankfort. On September 3, 1360, we find several newcomers entered in the citizens' register. Eight in all had the courage to be the first to move back to the city on the Main. A few came from Mayence or the neighboring Seligenstadt, but we find also one Jew from Heilbronn, one from Cassel, and one appears even from Basel. All bound themselves to lend money at interest. Women engaged in money transactions not only together with their husbands or sons, but often independently. Servants and maids lent money. Even the rabbis and the other religious functionaries did so as soon as the new congregation was sufficiently organized to have any.

*For explanation see chapter III, p. 38.

Before the Jews returned, the rubbish that had lain on the lots undisturbed since the conflagration was removed, at least superficially, but the whole appearance of that section remained inhospitable enough.

The work of cleaning up was now begun in earnest. The streets were levelled, the place about the synagogue was cleared, and all was in readiness for building. But the newcomers could not wait until their own houses were completed. They had to lodge with Christians to whom they paid rent.

The hope of the Council that before long there would be a further influx of Jews was not fulfilled. Quite the contrary! In the year 1362 two of the richest Jews moved away, and only one newcomer took their place. That Frankfort, in spite of having so much trade at its fairs, should have seemed so undesirable as a place of residence to the Jews of that time was hardly due to dread that the community might a third time come to a horrible end. Conditions were such in every city of Germany, as in Europe generally, that the Jews must have been prepared for such occurrences. No, quite simply, the terms of settlement did not appeal to them, as being too provisional in character. They had permission to stay only until the Emperor might revoke it. They might therefore be turned out of doors at any minute with only two months' grace for winding up their affairs. This stipulation made it impossible for any sense of home to develop. It also involved the likelihood of financial loss, for either the right to further sojourn had to be purchased with tremendous

bribes or the risk was run of failure to collect outstanding debts.

Only when in 1363 the city succeeded in putting through essential improvements in the conditions of settlement, such as an undisturbed residence of six years, and, in case of eventual expulsion, a one-year period of grace, did it again exercise the power to attract Jews to it. It can be proved that in 1364 there were fourteen taxpaying households; in 1365 as many as twenty. The city account books of those years give sufficient information to indicate what great profit the city derived from the Jews. Considerable sums were borrowed or received from them as gifts.

In 1378 Charles IV died in Prague, and his eighteen-year old son Wenzel succeeded him. "Show good breeding and respect to everybody"—this was the principal rule of government that his father had impressed on him, without, it must be owned, having set him a good example. Did Wenzel have any intention of following it? If so would he apply it in his dealings with the Jews? This anxious question must have presented itself to the Jews even if they were used to the fact that each new Imperial head thought out some fresh way of adding to the heavy burdens of their life. They were soon to learn that none of the previous Emperors had treated them so exclusively from the point of view of financial exploitation as did Wenzel.

To understand his policy, we must briefly call to mind the general conditions that prevailed in German territory. The picture to be sketched is not a

beautiful or a joyous one. The individualistic tendency in the nature of the Germans has always wrought devastation in their politics. In those days too this tendency revealed itself in factions and dissensions. The prosperous cities, allied as in the Swabian and Rhenish League of Cities, warred with the knights who defied them from their citadels in the country roundabout, and who had likewise formed a league. The princes constituted a third power, and pursued their own aims. The supreme head of the Empire was not strong enough to preside over the factions as referee. He too was bent on carrying out his plans for the aggrandizement of the power of his own house, and he had to be continually veering back and forth between the contending forces. Even if he had had the honorable intention of throwing his influence into the scale only for the general good, he would nevertheless have failed on account of the brute force of an actuality stronger than he. In the beginning Wenzel tried to break the power of the separate alliances by opposing to them the so-called "Leagues for Public Peace," in which he managed to unite members of the three classes at war with one another. This method worked successfully only so long as the princes remained on the side of the cities. The clash of interests was too great for the combination to endure. What weakened the cities from the outset was the dissension within their walls. The guilds fought for a share in the city government, which the patricians did not wish to relinquish. In these social conflicts the Jews, being exclusively a city-dwelling group, had to suffer more than others,

and be the scapegoat of both parties. Their capital, which the city authorities could always exploit at pleasure, was the main prop of the latter in their fight against the guilds. In the guilds hatred of the Jews was fostered by their active jealousy due to the competition of the Jews in the economic sphere and by the considerable indebtedness of the petty tradesmen to the Jews. In some cities of Swabia bloody excesses again took place. They were suppressed by the Swabian League of Cities, which hoped by so doing to win Wenzel's favor. The king, in spite of his lack of sympathy with city life, was on the side of the heads of the League, for he believed that his ever acute need of money was best served at the expense of the Imperial cities, which were then in a vigorous and flourishing condition, and especially at the expense of the Jews that lived in them. It therefore made no difference to him if they were expelled or even killed. He wanted to bleed them and share the revenue with the cities so as to make them tractable to his policy. He performed a financial operation in grand style in 1385 by proclaiming the cancellation of Jewish debts, to go into effect only in the territory of the Swabian League of Cities, for which reason it is not of much interest in the history of the Frankfort Jews.

In spite of Wenzel's wiles, the Rhenish League of Cities did not participate in this profitable business. Circumstances here were different. All democratic uprisings among the citizens were continually suppressed, and everywhere patricians alone occupied council seats. But this refusal meant only a respite

for the Rhenish Jews. In the next years the political situation changed completely. The alliance of the princes with the cities fell apart, and turned into open war. The knights rose and fought against the cities. The latter were defeated in many sections of Germany. Frankfort too suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the knights of the vicinity at Cronberg in the Taunus Mountains in 1389. The peace which the cities had to conclude involved great loss of authority. Wenzel, who had supported their efforts at union so long as he had to reckon with them as a powerful factor, now showed his true face. He forced the cities to break up their separate leagues, and declared null and void their dearly bought privileges over the Jews. Possibly he was not in earnest in this threat. He wanted to intimidate them and make them pliant for plundering the Jews anew. He seems not to have been deceived in his calculations. Even in the Rhenish cities there was no great opposition when, at the Reichstag at Nuremberg in 1390, there was a discussion of another cancellation of the debts owing to the Jews. Wenzel would certainly have liked to pocket the proceeds alone, but, as he knew from the start this would not be possible, he was bent on having the nobility and the princes, to whom he now showed his full favor, first take their slice, but leave something over for the cities. The ordinance was passed.

In Frankfort there was coolness toward the edict. The nobility of the surrounding country, occupying the castles of the Taunus Mountains and the Odenwald, deep in debt to the Frankfort Jews, were likely,

the Council felt, to go after and drain its best money source independently of it and help themselves as completely as possible out of their own financial difficulties. This the Council sought to avoid. At great expense it sent a special embassy to Prague. It did not spare the necessary "palm-oil," for it knew by experience that without it nothing could be accomplished with royal counsellors. It would take us too far astray to recount the gifts that went to Prague. Among other things there were sent ahead to the royal court three tuns of wine, which certainly must have put the thirsty Wenzel and his court into a conciliatory mood. The city obtained much for which it longed. The Emperor included the city in the region in which debts were to be liquidated, but at the same time gave it a completely free hand in winding up the business between debtors and Jewish creditors according to its own judgment. In spite of this backing by the Emperor, the Council set about the matter very cautiously. Not until it had won over the neighboring electors and the royal Chancellor did it try to come to an understanding with the knights and nobles, and it invited some of the neighboring rulers to a conference for the purpose in Frankfort. In any case, it dared not wait too long with the execution of the decree, because the nobles began to be impatient. They could hardly wait to be completely freed in so convenient a way from their heavy burden of debt. They would have liked to secure their "right" with mailed fist. At that time the knights of the neighborhood held a festive tournament in Frankfort. They wanted to use the

opportunity for vigorous self-help. The Council had gotten wind of the design and had ordered out a troop of hirelings for the protection of the Jewish quarter. No act of violence occurred.

The execution of the compact was no easy piece of work, for the noble debtors had to be satisfied so that feuds should not become imminent. On the other hand some profit ought to accrue to the city treasury. Even the Jews had been brought to the point of accepting the compact with good will. If the "good will" may be reasonably doubted, it remains true that they were not subjected to any special compulsion as had been the case five years before in the Swabian Imperial cities.

To preserve the reputation of impartiality, noblemen of the vicinity were invited to become members of the city Settlement Commission, and were paid ample allowances for this activity in their own interests. We must refrain from describing the conduct of the business in detail. The individual cases show the utmost differences and have only one characteristic in common, that the Jew always lost a great part of his debt claims. After the nobility had been satisfied, the Council, at a comparatively late date, set about putting the debts of its own citizens in order. The following guiding principles were laid down by and large: Anyone that owed the Jews up to ten florins was released from payment of capital and interest and straightway had his note or pledge returned. If the debt amounted to more than ten florins then the interest already paid was regarded as an amortization of the capital and deducted. For the

rest, not the Jew, but the Frankfort Council, was to be the creditor, and it was to settle debts with both parties to the contract according to its own views. Debts incurred after September 16, 1390, whether large or small, were to be paid to the Jews in full.

It appears from the extant documents that the Frankfort citizens were not indebted to the Jews for great sums. In the year 1389, 50 per cent of all the claims amounted to ten florins or less, and in 1390 there was a like proportion. Since the money had been borrowed mostly for carrying on trade, and the loan was therefore purely productive credit, it can hardly be said that unsound relations existed. Conditions were different with regard to the nobles of the vicinity, who ran into debt only in order to live in sumptuous style. Most of the aristocratic families, who dwelt proudly in their castles, such as the knights of Cronberg in the Taunus Mountains and the Frankenbergs in the Odenwald, were so deep in debt to the Frankfort Jews that Wenzel's debt liquidation actually delivered them from the direst economic want. All things considered, it was a rather drastic method of rehabilitation and not a way that helped in the long run. It was all too tempting when income did not come up to standards of living to borrow again and create purely consumptive loans in the hope that another compulsory liquidation of debts would secure release from inconvenient creditors. The Jews on their part, after the experience they had had, were compelled on account of the danger to their claims to set the risk premium higher than ever.

For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that besides the nobles and townspeople peasant debtors also had found their way to the Jewish lenders. They came chiefly from the immediate vicinity of Frankfort, from such places as Bergen, Hochstadt, Neuenhain, and even some farther away.

The work of the Settlement Commission lasted until the end of the century. It had been no easy task to reconcile so many conflicting interests. Complaints and grievances and finally challenges soon began to come in from all sides. The challenges were directed either against the city or against the Jews, often against both. They did not mean that the knight Hartmut von Cronberg or Philipp von Falkenstein defied a Frankfort councillor or Jew to a duel or a man to man fight. What they involved was a series of vexatious practices designed to annoy the person challenged. Hartmut, the Magistrate of Lich, who had challenged the City of Frankfort, did not permit the fields belonging to the city that lay within his territory to be tilled for a number of years. A knight of the Rheingau maintained a feud against the city by taking unsuspecting citizens of Frankfort prisoners when they entered the Rheingau at Östrich and placing the wine ships of two other citizens under embargo.

Perhaps the debt liquidation would never have come to a settlement if Wenzel himself had not again taken a hand in the matter and warned the nobles and other debtors not to take too great advantage of the favor he bestowed upon them, and, above all, not

to contract more debts with the Jews in the hope of a third release from their obligations.

Unfortunately we do not know what sum the city exchequer gained by the process of settlement, nor are we informed what per cent was King Wenzel's profit, nor can the exact figures be fixed for the loss suffered by the Jews. The number of Jewish households at any rate did not decrease during those years, but wavered between eighteen and twenty in the decade from 1390 to 1400. Whither indeed could the Jews have emigrated? Nowhere either in Germany or in other civilized countries of Europe was an abode available where they could live in full assurance of their legal rights. From the striking reduction of the taxes imposed on them during those years we learn that they had suffered serious injury in their finances, but they had not been ruined. A further evidence of their great loss of capital was the fact that the city of Frankfort was forced to borrow money from foreign Jews.

CHAPTER III

WENZEL'S DEPOSITION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GHETTO

At the beginning of the fifteenth century Wenzel was no longer on the throne. "For many weighty reasons" he had been deposed by the German electors in August 1400. His successor was Rupert of the Palatinate. There is no doubt that Rupert inwardly shared all the prejudices of his day against the Jews and attributed to them every sort of baseness. Nevertheless during his whole reign he treated them with consideration, for he was forever in need of money—the proverbial prince with empty pockets—and he did not want to stop this unfailing source of supplies. He could not, indeed, think of another remission of debts in Wenzel's manner because this financial operation had shaken credit to an unusual extent; but other ways were found to secure money from the Jews. In the first place Rupert insisted on a strict collection of the "güldener Opferpfennig," a specific Jewish tax, referred to above. Far more profitable for the Emperor were the confirmation and regranting of franchises and letters of pardon. He made these a steady source of income by granting them always for only short periods of time—three, four, or at most six years—at the end of which they had to be renewed. Rupert devised yet a third method for making Jewish money flow into his treasury. He laid claim to the fines from the Jews in

the various communities imposed on account of violations of law or minor offenses in part by the Jewish, in part by the Christian authorities. Among such offenses were reckoned for example the following: when a Jew disturbed divine service in the synagogue; when he wrongfully denounced a coreligionist to the Council; when he refused to obey an officer of the city or of the Emperor. Suddenly Rupert paid special attention to the religious and moral condition of the Jews, and to several to whom he had entrusted the collection of the "Opferpfennig" he also gave the duty of looking out for transgressions on the part of their fellow Jews and promptly negotiating with the transgressors for the fine due the Emperor. Occasion soon arose to proceed against three Frankfort Jews, fairly well-to-do of course, who were accused of not having ceased to associate with excommunicated Jews. The agents of Rupert soon saw their way clear to making an accusation against the whole of Frankfort Jewry, because it had on its part encouraged widespread intercourse with the three accused individuals, who had refused to pay the fines. The Council was eventually drawn in. As so often happened in mediaeval lawsuits the affair dragged on for a long time until it was finally disposed of by the gift of a considerable sum of money to the Imperial treasury. And that is what the object had been from the start.

Rupert, the melancholy shadow of an Emperor, died in the year 1410. He had not, at the last, inspired even the oppressed, enslaved Jews with respect. His attempt to establish a chief rabbinate for all the

German Jews had been wrecked by their opposition. The rabbis of the various communities did not acknowledge the chief rabbi; in fact, they excommunicated him.

Wenzel's brother Sigismund succeeded Rupert of the Palatinate as Emperor of the Germans. What was Sigismund's attitude toward the Jews? Apparently he took no vital interest in them either for good or for ill; he regarded them purely from the financial point of view. He squeezed out of them whatever he could, for, like his predecessor, he suffered from perpetual lack of funds. At the beginning of his reign the Frankfort Jews sent an embassy to him to arrange for the renewal and confirmation of their privileges. After what they heard from other communities they were ready to pay a large sum, but what was actually demanded of them far exceeded their anticipations. They had to pay five thousand florins. At that time, it must be remembered, the Frankfort community was not very large and, except for a few rich members, was not capable of paying heavy taxes. In the year 1412 it reached its height, having at that time twenty-four households. Soon thereafter began a speedy emigration of the Jews. At the beginning of June, 1414, only nine households were counted; and in the following year eight; in 1416, with three taxable families, it reached its nadir, and it was not till sixty-two years later, 1478, that it again attained the number of seventeen households. We cannot explain precisely why there was this striking diminution in numbers of the Jews in the Frankfort jurisdiction. Perhaps the burdens imposed

on the congregation by the Council were too oppressive. At all events disputes arose, for we hear of the locking up of the Jewish burial place and similar annoyances. At this juncture Sigismund acted the rôle of the protector of the oppressed. It was not at all pleasing to him that so rich a community as the Frankfort Jews should scatter to the four ends of the earth. He told the Council that in its proceedings "he saw, to his great displeasure, not only an act of meddling with his exchequer, but also contempt for his letters and franchises." The intervention of the Emperor evidently was successful, but we do not learn what price the Jews paid for it.

It would take too long to report in detail in how many cases the Emperor found occasion to extort money from all the Jews of Germany as well as from those of Frankfort. When, during the Council of Constance, Pope Martin V issued a bull which really contained humane regulations for the treatment of Jews, they had to pay "bull-money" into the Imperial exchequer. During the Hussite wars "heretic money" was demanded of the Jews as their contribution to the expenses of the war. The Jewry of Frankfort refused to pay this extra tax, for which they suffered the penalty of having the ban of the Empire ordained against them. This meant no more and no less than that they had to leave the city, which though not too hospitable had yet afforded shelter. Otherwise Frankfort itself would have fallen under the ban. In those days it was not without danger for a Jew to do without the city's protection and live in the open country, for the people's passions had been inflamed

by the Hussite wars. What could afford them more satisfaction than that they could take action against heretics at home too, the Jews, on whom at any rate, according to established prescription, they laid the blame for the new misfortune of this war? What the Frankfort Jews had been unwilling to pay as tax, they afterwards had to offer generously as gifts, in order finally to have the ban lifted from them.

In the year 1437 Sigismund died. A few months after his death, March 1438, his son-in-law, the most powerful of the princes of the Empire, Albert V of Austria, also King of Bohemia and Hungary, was unanimously elected Emperor in Frankfort. He started the line of Habsburg rulers, who occupied the throne in uninterrupted succession until the extinction of the Roman Empire of the German nation in the year 1806. He was preceded by his reputation as an economical, cautious prince, experienced in war, but fanaticism was another of his outstanding qualities. Just as he proceeded mercilessly against the followers of Huss, and had them burnt at the stake, so he sent many Jews to the pyre on the charge of desecrating the host, and drove the rest out of Austria.

There is no way of knowing whether he meant to treat the Jews of the Empire more humanely, for his reign of only one and a half years gave him no opportunity to develop a definite policy in regard to the Jews.

Several months after Albert's death, his successor was found in the person of his son-in-law, Duke Frederick of Styria, who wore the crown for more

than two generations without credit to himself and without benefit to the Empire. He lacked the force and the will to take decisive part in events as they ran their course in the Empire. He was interested mainly in his hereditary lands. The judgment passed upon Frederick as ruler sounds annihilating, whereas a series of worthy qualities adorn him as a private individual—interest in learning, disinclination to violence, gentleness, and an exaggerated sense of justice. Thus he regarded the Jews as fellow-men even though in his everlasting need of money he always exploited them financially. During his entire reign the German Jews, including those of Frankfort, were not excessively exploited for the royal exchequer.

Nevertheless it cannot be asserted that the Frankfort Jews of that time led a peaceful life worthy of human beings. Conditions in the Empire were far too confused and unregulated. Frederick's weak hand could not humble the nobles and petty princes, the "public peace" established with difficulty was not heeded anywhere, bloody quarrels and feuds arose and throve luxuriously. Particularly in the vicinity of Frankfort, in the Wetterau, flourished bandits who continually made the highways and byways dangerous. The Council was forced to employ a special troop of hirelings to escort travellers, but this did not prevent even a cardinal's being plundered in the neighborhood of the city. If an exalted prince of the church was not spared, what would be the fate of unprotected Jews who might be encountered on the road, even if no cause for feud existed? Feuds, how-

ever, often occurred, and indeed on the slightest pretexts. One example will suffice to illustrate. Ludwig von Waldeck wrote to the Jew Hirsch in Frankfort and for some time received no answer. He therefore declared a feud with him and all the Frankfort Jews, and some of his friends joined him, so that actually if the Jews ventured on the shortest journey they did so at the extreme risk of life, limb and property.

All these sorrows and trials which we have here reported have the significance only of little dissonances in comparison with what was inflicted upon them in the year 1460, that is, the compulsion to move into a ghetto. Until that date they had dwelt in the best portion of the city between the Main and the Hauptkirche, mingled with Christians, sometimes even under the same roof. In order to grasp this new hardship, one must follow the steady deterioration of the civil status of the Jews toward the end of the Middle Ages. From 1375 on when they settled in Frankfort they were no longer entered in the register as citizens, as Christians were, but were accepted only on the basis of a contract which was called Stättigkeit (right to settle) and which every Jew concluded with the Council for himself and his family. These Jewish contracts are documents of great value in the study of the times. From the terms, always growing more stringent, one can judge how the situation of the Jews became worse in the course of decades. The contracts were not valid for a lifetime, but as a rule only for two or three years. If for any reason they were not renewed at the end of

the time, the Jew had to take up his staff and wander on. Homelessness then threatened a previous resident. Soon one limitation followed after another. In 1396 a decree of the Council forbade the Jews to employ Christian nurses. Somewhat later they were forbidden to employ Christian servants at all. The fifteenth century brought forth one hampering restriction after another. For the most part, these decrees were issued by the Pope or by Church assemblies, or by individual prelates; in the case of Frankfort, chiefly by the Archbishop of Mayence. Thus the Council of Basel (1431-1449) promulgated new decrees of great severity against the Jews. For instance, on Christian holidays the Jews must not appear on the street, and, indeed, must keep their windows closed tight. Above all their aim was to distinguish the Jew by a special garment or badge. At one time they were required to wear pointed hats; at another a yellow circle on the breast. For women the mark was a veil with blue stripes. The Council of Frankfort had indeed never insisted that the Jews must observe the rules for dress, and so about the middle of the fifteenth century the Diocese of Mayence to which Frankfort belonged issued the strict decree that the Jews must wear the distinguishing marks under penalty of a pound of pure gold. The badge for men was a grey circle or ring of the diameter of a large apple; for women similar stripes of the width of a stole. At the same time the Archbishop issued new edicts in regard to the practice of usury by the Jews. Eventually the whole affair ran to the ground; the prince of the church suddenly

even became very favorable to the Jews. Was this connected with his everlasting money affairs? We have no information about this.

The plan of segregating the Jewish residences did not crop up in Frankfort till 1438. Probably there entered into the situation the jealousy of Christian traders, who begrudged the Jews the location of their homes as favorable to business. At the time, however, this plan did not take firm shape and its execution could be warded off. It was quite another matter when the Emperor himself interposed in its favor. In enumerating the traits of Frederick III, we mentioned that his ideas were much more humane than those of his predecessors where Jews were concerned. But this held true only to a certain extent. At all events, when he repeatedly visited Frankfort, it made an unpleasant impression on him that unlike the Jews of other cities, those of Frankfort lived in the best section of the city, that if they wished they could even spy on the services in the cathedral of St. Bartholomew, the chief church of the city, and that their own services disturbed the neighbors. All this ran counter to his churchly piety; it could not be allowed to go on.

At first, the Imperial decree was regarded as many other decrees of Frederick's, that is, not at all. The Council could take the risk of ignoring it because the Church itself did not show any zeal in the affair, and the Archbishop of Mayence remained entirely passive. But when in the year 1458 the Emperor renewed his demand the Council no longer resisted, as at that time it did not harbor a benevolent attitude

toward the Jews. Even so a year and a half passed. Then, however, the Council went about the matter in earnest, and demanded of the frightened Jews that they vacate their homes and close their synagogues within a quarter of a year. It offered them for their new abiding place a section of the city which at the time had hardly any residents. It lay in the neighborhood of the Main, outside of the oldest city wall, which had been included in the new district that was walled in when the city was first enlarged. Up to this date only gardens and vegetable patches and scattered houses occupied by gardeners and fishermen had been there. Hence the name given to the section was Fishers' Field.

In vain did the Jews try to avert their impending doom. They were ready for every other concession, for every sacrifice. They offered to surround their synagogue with walls of double height, so that not a sound of their service might escape into the outside world. They made other proposals. And they implored that if they were positively not to be allowed to remain in their homes, they should at least not be banished to the Fishers' Field. In moving words they described to the Council the dangers that would threaten them there; that they would be completely cut off from communication with the rest of the city, would be exposed to attacks by thieves and murderers, and, if fire broke out, would not be able to secure help quickly enough. "Even now," they wrote to the Council, "when we go into the city through the Schmiedgasse or the Fahrgasse, stones and insults are cast at us, since one of our number

often has to deal with queer people." How much greater would be their danger if they lived in so lonesome and so remote a neighborhood! And there were other disadvantages to be considered. There were no public wells in that neighborhood, so that good drinking water would be scarce, and the nature of the ground made it difficult to dig cellars.

But the Council was not to be swayed from its decision either by sensible representations or by affecting laments; the fate of the Jews was sealed. Only so much consideration was given to them that attention was paid to their wishes in regard to the building of their houses and provision was made for draw-wells. And so the Jews yielded to their hard lot and did not carry out their original determination to emigrate.

In the year 1462 three houses were completed, and the Jews could have begun to move in, but they were in no hurry. The order had to be repeated several times before it was heeded. How many more houses were built at the time is not known. The account books only indicate that the city spent 6,289 gold florins on them. Since the building fund of the city brought in only 4 per cent interest, the Jews had afterwards to build their houses at their own expense, as they had built the synagogue.

Walls thirty feet high enclosed the new settlement ("New Egypt," as the Jews called it in bitter mockery) and cut it off from the rest of the world. Three gates allowed communication with the city. They were locked in the evening and were guarded by watchmen till the next morning. And so if emergen-

The Ghetto in the 17th Century, according to a plan by Merian

cies arose during the night, if they needed a physician or a midwife, the Jews would have been helpless if the Council had not made a concession and turned over to a trustworthy Jew the keys to the little wickets which were in the big gates.

So the segregation of the Jews, their most tragic, their darkest Middle Ages, became actuality in an age when (only three decades later) the act of a Columbus tremendously widened the horizon of their world, in an age when so many spiritual champions fructified mankind with new ideas. The harmful effects of this enforced segregation did not fail to appear. The Jews suffered in soul as well as in body for having to live behind walls for centuries. Cut off from what was the vogue in the Christian world about them, allowed to appear only as transient guests when they had business to transact, they lost every criterion of general validity, and their manners deteriorated. They conducted themselves oddly, ridiculously, and so more than ever elicited the scorn and mockery which had made caricatures of them. Instead of gradually bridging over the chasm between them, Jews and Christians were torn asunder more and more.

On the other hand, it must not be denied that the ghetto at that time offered the Jews certain advantages. They felt themselves hidden behind its walls, protected from mistreatment and unexpected outbreaks of popular rage. They had a sense of being at home because they lived in neighborly fashion with people like themselves. The little community, which up to the end of the fifteenth century num-

bered only twenty households or little over one hundred souls, dwelt in less confined quarters, with free access to light and air. The new houses, of framework, with roofs and partly also fronts covered with slate, with cozy-looking gables, faced upon the street which could even boast of a pavement. Adequate provision was made for the religious needs of the community. There was first of all the synagogue built of stone. It was erected on a firm foundation, had thirteen windows, three doors, and an arched roof. Unfortunately our imagination cannot make a picture of the structure because the notes on it that have been preserved are too scanty. At all events the Jews must have done their utmost to fashion the house of God worthily. Besides the synagogue there was a women's ritual bath house and a community house, which lodged the officers, the butcher, the precentor, and the "Schulklopper" (the man who gave notice of the time for services). For social life, especially for weddings, there was a dance-hall. Besides, there were two inns, of which one could lodge Jewish travellers who were on their way through town, and who streamed to Frankfort in great numbers particularly at the time of the fair. The sanitary conditions left much to be desired, but altogether in those days people were not so particular about them. A hospital with very primitive arrangements served at once as almshouse, as inn, and as jail.

It was very serious that the privies of the houses were in the cellars, and that the west side of the street backed on the moat of the former city forti-

fication, which served as a pit and dump for all sorts of rubbish.

Whatever the conditions may have been, curiously many foreign Jews considered the new ghetto of Frankfort a desirable place in which to live. Many petitions were made to the Council for permission to settle there, but these were only seldom granted. Nevertheless in those years the community grew steadily.

CHAPTER IV

PFEFFERKORN AND THE DISPUTE CONCERNING JEWISH BOOKS (1509-1511)

In the next decades there were no outwardly startling events in the history of the Frankfort Jews. They lived their daily life in the ghetto, completely absorbed in the cares of earning their living and warding off, as the necessity rose again and again, both great and petty acts of hostility. On every occasion and in the most varied ways the Imperial treasury tried to extort imposts from them. In all the wars of that exceedingly warlike decade the Jewish money bag was always remembered. Regularly the Council tried to avert from its Jews the demands made upon them which in its eyes intruded on its very own property rights, for it recalled the deed of Charles IV pledging the Jews to it. The Council was in constant fear that the Jews would be sucked dry and would not be able to yield it sufficient revenue.

The threatening challenges of the neighboring nobles did not cease either. Even "the holy Vehmgericht" (secret tribunal) was unpleasantly interested in the Jews. It had originally been called into being to discover sins for which penance had not been done, but it interfered in civil quarrels about unredeemed pledges, etc.

Frederick III died in August, 1493, at a ripe age. His Jewish body physician, on whom he bestowed full favor and whom he had even knighted, cared for him to the hour of his death. Maximilian I succeeded Frederick. The beginning of his reign was coincident with a turning point in the history of the Jewish people. A year before, 1492, the very year in which the caravels of Columbus first reached the coast of America, the Jews were banished from Spain, where they had flourished as they never had in Germany. The refugees found a hospitable reception in the territory of the Grand Sultan of Turkey. In Germany too there were many estates of the realm which would have been glad to rid themselves of the Jews in Spanish fashion. Especially the citizenry of the Imperial cities, which had become intellectually and economically strong and influential, found their able Jewish competitors vexatious.

In their need, the Jews received little protection from Emperor Maximilian. Not that he was directly hostile to them. In fact, he sometimes bestowed special favor on individual Jews, as on Joseph, honorably known under the name of Rabbi Joselmann, son of Gerson of Rosheim in Alsace, whom he appointed as the official representative, the "advocate," of the Jews of the Empire. But he had no fixed rules in his policy toward the Jews, and he was guided not by essential considerations but by momentary moods and requirements.

Everything that distinguished the reign of Maximilian, both for good and for evil, was perceptible within the walls of the Frankfort ghetto, always to be

sure in the one form, demands for money. Thus the Jews of the Empire, including those of Frankfort, had to defray the expense of the new furnishings of the Supreme Court. Thus, as in the case of former rulers, they had to make special offerings of money during all the wars of the "last knight," as Maximilian is called, whether they were against the Swiss, the Burgundians, the cities of Flanders, France, or the Republic of Venice. For the Jews of those times, demands for money repeatedly made by the head of the Empire and by various other authorities, as well as their own efforts to parry them, must have seemed phenomena of their daily life, so unavoidable, indeed so necessary, that they no longer grew unduly excited when fresh instances confronted them.

An entirely different attack, which endangered the most precious, the most holy of their possessions, the thing that gave worth and significance to their humiliation and sense of injury, threatened them in the year 1509. It was an attempt to rob them of their holy books. How could the ghetto Jew have endured his life at all if he had not drawn solace and inspiration from them! The heavy burdens of the workday became light in the expectation of the Sabbath and the holidays when he could bury himself in his religious writings. There now appeared in Frankfort a man by the name of Pfefferkorn the bearer of an Imperial edict, of a nature to produce the greatest excitement among the Jews of the Empire—for it was addressed to all of them. It made the charge that according to trustworthy reports they owned books that were unfounded and useless, which calum-

niated the Christian faith, lacked respect for the Five Books of Moses, and were the real cause of the failure of the Jews to accept the Christian faith. Therefore, to avoid Imperial displeasure and severe penalties to person and life, they should surrender all their books to Pfefferkorn. Those books which should be found to be of this injurious sort were to be confiscated and destroyed by Pfefferkorn, "but only with the knowledge of the Council, in the presence of the priest and two deputies of the Council," so that even if the Jews did not go over to Christianity, at least they should not remain in error and heresy. The Emperor expected all authorities to put themselves willingly at Pfefferkorn's disposal.

Who was this Pfefferkorn? The Imperial edict describes him as "a learned man, well versed in the Jewish faith and in the Five Books of Moses and the Prophets." But this was not so. He was born a Jew in 1476; his birthplace is not known. We find him in Bohemia as a butcher, who in addition to his main business engaged in money transactions. Discovered in an act of burglary he was thrown into prison, and he escaped punishment and the "painful trial" (torture) only through the intercession of his relatives who paid a rather large fine in cash. Bohemia became too hot a place for him then, and he went to Germany. In 1504 he, with his wife and children and several friends—in all ten persons—became converted to Christianity. Recognition of this step was not lacking. The Dominicans, whose stronghold at that time was Cologne, secured for him from the burgomaster the post of superintendent of a hospital and

weigher of salt. He succeeded in giving his conversion great general significance by audaciously assuring them that he had been loved and greatly honored by his former coreligionists, and that his baptism would cause many of them to accept it similarly. From 1507 on he developed a brisk literary activity. Every line of his pamphlets breathes grim hatred of the Jews. He advocates the severest regulations against them, even their banishment. Above all, however, he recommended, as in his opinion a sure measure for their improvement, depriving them of their books, which he called "the mother of their malignity."

His patrons—now the Franciscans—secured an audience for him with the sister of Maximilian, Kunigunde, who after the death of her husband had become a nun. He convinced her of the merit of his efforts and obtained her active coöperation. She gave him a letter to her brother, who at that time, in 1509, was in the field against the Venetians. In her letter she adjures the Emperor to render all possible help to Pfefferkorn's anti-Jewish aims. And Maximilian did this. Without reckoning the consequences of his step, in the midst of his warlike and diplomatic undertakings on Italian soil, he issued the edict mentioned above. It handed Jewish writings over to Pfefferkorn practically without restriction.

Think what that meant! Not only the greatly scorned Talmud, of the contents of which probably not a Christian of the time had an exact knowledge, no, their entire literature, including the Bible, was to fall a sacrifice to the fanaticism of Pfefferkorn.

Returning from Italy, Pfefferkorn hastened to Reuchlin in Stuttgart, that famous humanist, highly respected in the whole Empire, who was probably at that time the only Christian on German soil who had a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew language and to some extent also of Hebrew literature. Pfefferkorn thought it would be especially easy to win Reuchlin over to his plans. But he was mistaken. The scholar at once recognized the complete ignorance of Pfefferkorn, who was helpless before even easy passages in Jewish books and had to confess that he could perhaps read the Bible but not the talmudic writings at all. And still he had the impudence, as we have said, to appear with the edict he had gotten by such sneaking methods in Frankfort, the city with the largest Jewish congregation in Germany which enjoyed a certain fame on account of its Jewish schools. Here the hunt for Jewish writings would be particularly rich in results. He made a tremendous impression on the Council. The Imperial edict was read in solemn session, and a committee of the most respected members was formed to carry it out. The chapter of Saint Bartholomew's College, which was promptly communicated with, agreed to help with the confiscation without having first asked permission of the Archbishop of Mayence.

In the meanwhile, Pfefferkorn saw to it that news of his presence should be spread in Jewry. He challenged the Jews to a religious disputation, but they refused, made wise by earlier experiences. Then the Jews were called to the synagogue. The edict was read to them, and they were ordered to bring all their

books to the house of God without delay and without exception. At first they were as though stunned by the blow, which came upon them so unexpectedly. Then they gathered their wits and declared that "as frightened people" they could not make an immediate decision. They begged for time to consider, and this was granted, after the rabbis had pledged themselves that none of the books would be concealed. On September 28, a Friday, the respite granted them ran out, and Pfefferkorn took all the books he could find in the synagogue, 168 in number. He also did something not allowed by the edict, he forbade the Jews to use their prayerbooks, which at first he had left to them, at their services, and moreover he forbade them to hold services. He would have liked at once to ransack the homes of the ghetto too, but in the meanwhile the Sabbath had begun, and the clergy were considerate enough not to wish to disturb it. The grace thus obtained the Jews used to inform the Archbishop of Mayence, Uriel von Gemmingen, of what had happened. The Archbishop, without being exactly friendly to the Jews, had always been just and fair toward them. Besides he was enraged that the clergy of his diocese should have gone over his head and proceeded in a purely ecclesiastical affair upon an order of the Emperor. He forbade their further coöperation and thereupon the Council refused Pfefferkorn its own support, so that the whole affair came to a standstill. Sadly disappointed Pfefferkorn left the town, but not before he had asked the Council for board expenses, which it granted to the extent of two florins. He got

a second letter of recommendation from his patroness Kunigunde and again betook himself to Maximilian's camp in Italy. But the Frankfort Jews did not remain idle. They understood perfectly the gravity of what threatened them. Unfortunately this was not so with the other Jews of the Empire. A conference called to meet at Frankfort in order that common counsel might be taken in regard to the important affair was only scantily attended though the Council had assured the delegates free escort. The other congregations were hardly ready even for sacrifices of money, whereas the Frankfort Jews were of the opinion that they were not the only ones who ought to pay for a matter that concerned all other Jews just as much. When the decision was reached to send a messenger to Italy to plead for Imperial protection, the serious mistake was made of not providing the necessary funds, so that from the outset the success of the mission was dubious. The messenger of the Frankfort Jews, Jonathan ben Zion by name, was not a prominent personage, distinguished for wealth or learning, but a simple straightforward man, who obviously was the only person that displayed the courage to risk the venturesome journey.

On October 15, 1509, we learn that he, with his servant Hezekiah, was in Bozen. Thence he went further toward the south. Jonathan would have liked to return home, for he felt uncomfortable in his strange surroundings. "His money had been used practically to the last heller; he could raise more cash only by paying 200 per cent interest. Besides, the

war had made the cost of living bitterly high, and the Emperor was nowhere to be reached, for to-day he was here, to-morrow there." Thus he wrote home. His naïve plaints, composed without any trick of style, stirred the community, and they sent him two hundred florins, but he was in no case to spend more. In a state of great depression Jonathan ben Zion reached the camp in Verona. Fortunately for his cause, he there met a respected, influential Jew, Isaac of Trieste, and his brother-in-law Moschel, who were more skilful in such missions than our Jonathan. They secured an audience with Maximilian, at which Isaac was probably spokesman. The Emperor displayed great friendliness and good nature; and even though he bound himself by no promises, still Jonathan felt certain that he was far from cherishing such evil intentions toward the Jews as had been feared after Pfefferkorn's appearance on the scene. Toward the end of October Pfefferkorn again turned up in Verona. He saw at once what was at stake for him and acted accordingly. Relying on Kunigunde's letter, he begged the Emperor anew for far-reaching powers against the Jews. In the meanwhile, when he happened to encounter Jonathan on the streets of Verona, he tried to intimidate him with threats and abuse, so that Jonathan, alarmed for his personal safety, threw himself at his ruler's feet and begged for his most gracious protection. The Emperor by now really did not know on whose side he was. He would most gladly have rid himself of the whole tiresome affair and have entrusted the decision to a commission. And that is what happened. In comparison

with the first one from Padua the new decree issued in Roveredo was a gain for the Jews. It did not leave the fate of their books to the whim of their bitterest enemy alone. He was now to be only a member of a many-headed commission, over which the Archbishop of Mayence was to preside. To this commission belonged, beside a number of respected university professors, the Grand Inquisitor of Cologne, Dr. Jacob Hoogstraten, as well as Reuchlin and the priest Victor von Karben, a baptized Jew. This commission was to be guided by the rule that it was "not to press on the Jews unreasonably." Its duty was to examine the books which Pfefferkorn had taken and had declared suspicious, and at once return those found to be innocent. The rest were to be handled in accordance with the provisions of the Padua decree. Strangely enough the Archbishop of Mayence, who was to act as chairman of the commission, never called a meeting at all, but commissioned two men to execute the business, Dr. Hermann Ortlieb, a Bible scholar, and—Pfefferkorn, whom he himself had shortly before represented to the Emperor as quite unfit for the task. Obviously the Archbishop had lost all interest in the affair, whereas the Frankfort Council was undergoing several changes of heart. At the beginning of the year 1510 its former passive attitude changed into one of sympathy for the Jews, though, to be sure, this operated only behind the scenes. The city deputy to the Imperial Diet at Augsburg was instructed to side with the Jewish messengers in Augsburg and secretly help them in every way. The reason for this change

of mind was not of a spiritual but purely of a material nature. Frankfort feared, as did also Reuchlin and other Humanists, that Pfefferkorn had not waged war against the Jewish books out of religious zeal but entirely for financial reasons; that is, to extort big sums from the individual communities for the return of their spiritual property. It is easy to understand that the Council did not want to grant to anyone the right "to shear its sheep, since that would cause a decided loss to it."

But Pfefferkorn showed himself the stronger force. For a while he had not bothered himself at all about Frankfort, but had brought alarm and anxiety to various Rhine communities, such as Worms, Mayence, and Bingen. He then appeared suddenly in Augsburg and tried to further his plans by word of mouth, but chiefly in long-winded writings. He declared that everybody who did not approve of his plans was bribed by the Jews. Then only, when he thought that he had sufficiently prepared the ground for the continuation of his activity, Pfefferkorn, in company with Hermann Ortlieb, again appeared in Frankfort, shortly before Easter. The alarm of the Jews may be imagined when they had let themselves hope that this affair of the confiscation of their books was closed. But the unexpected visit was most unpleasant for the Council too. It was able to secure a short delay till after Easter, but since even then no contrary decree came from Augsburg, where Maximilian was still sojourning on account of the Imperial Diet, Pfefferkorn went ahead without hindrance. This time no fewer than 1,500 books fell to him as

prey, proof of the active intellectual life that prevailed in the Frankfort community at that time. The books were listed, packed into barrels, and stored in Marthaspital. The catalogue then made of the books still exists, and it is certainly of great interest from the point of view of cultural history. We cannot, of course, dwell on this in detail here, but we should not omit mention of the fact that among the books were to be found some prayerbooks in the German language.

The Jews were now robbed of their best possession. They were particularly pained by the loss of their prayerbooks, since without them a well-regulated service was not possible. All the more zealously they approached the Council to work further for the repeal of the order of confiscation. Since, however, they had been left in the lurch by the Jews of the Empire, they were able to allow no more than two hundred florins for bribes. And so the city deputy considered his efforts futile from the outset. Then a new solution was hit upon. Duke Erich of Brunswick-Kalenberg, an old champion of the House of Habsburg, had plunged heavily into debt through his service in war and his purchase of troops of hirelings on behalf of Maximilian, and so had to pawn his jewels with the Jews of Frankfort. The period for redemption had long been passed. Indeed once the Emperor had interceded for an extension of time. The Jews thereupon promised to keep the Duke's pledges another year, and the Imperial counsellor, who was conducting the negotiations, in turn promised to meet their wishes in the matter of the books.

On May 23, the communication was sent to Frankfort that "for evident reasons" it was found necessary to stop the confiscation of books. So the Council restored to their owners the books that had been kept in safety. This happened early in June, 1510. Extraordinary rejoicing prevailed in the Frankfort community, and with great satisfaction they informed their coreligionists all over the land of the happy issue of the affair.

Pfefferkorn and his following were of course not satisfied with this decision, and tried anew to make the Emperor change his mind. And even though Maximilian understood that he could not contradict himself so frequently about one and the same matter, still he induced the Archbishop of Mayence to demand opinions both of the German universities and of Reuchlin, Victor von Karben, and Hoogstraten upon the question of whether it would be of benefit to Christianity to burn the talmudic books. Obviously a Reuchlin and a Hoogstraten could not be of one and the same mind in intellectual and religious matters. The former gave an opinion in favor of the Jewish literature. The consequence was that all the enemies of the Jews, and first and foremost the Dominicans with their chief Hoogstraten at their head, gathered about Pfefferkorn. The battle of the intellect, waged by the Humanists with the Dominicans, came to its climax in the "Epistle of Obscure Men," that vigorous opening note of the Reformation. Pfefferkorn, a man of action, was little served by the disputations of scholars. He wanted more drastic measures. He preached openly

against Reuchlin and the Jews in front of Saint Bartholomew's Church. At the spring fair of 1511 he personally, aided by his wife, sold his inflammatory work, "Der Brandspiegel" ("The Mirror of Fire"), on the streets of Frankfort. In it he accused the Jews of casting aspersions upon the Christian government, of blasphemy, superstition, and heresy. But "Der Augenspiegel" ("The Eye Mirror") by Reuchlin, written in intelligible German, also had a good sale at the Frankfort fair and was bought by many Jews.

CHAPTER V

PERIOD OF THE REFORMATION (SIXTEENTH CENTURY)

The controversy about their literature was settled happily for the Jews. They heard nothing more of Pfefferkorn. Apparently, however, he continued to agitate secretly against the Jews of Frankfort. In the Mayence circles that were close to him and his friends, the Dominicans, a plan was conceived, grand in scale, to drive the Jews out of the whole western part of the Empire. What a blow that would be for Reuchlin and others of like mind! That meant something very different from an examination and possibly a confiscation of Jewish writings. If Frankfort behaved like other respectable Imperial cities, the bulwark of German Jewry would be destroyed.

Though things had not come to this pass, the soil had been well prepared. The Stättigkeiten granted were more and more harshly drawn. Trade was more and more restricted. The cleft between the Jewish and the Christian population became wider and wider. Considerations, which in former years made the Jews' presence in the city appear desirable to the Council, lost their validity. When in need of money it resorted to the patricians, a considerable number of whom had grown wealthy on the rent of landed property and wholesale trade. Few Jews of that time could match them in financial resources. Council members began to make a thorough study

of all the documents relating to the Jews, especially the well-known charter of Charles IV. So much was clear, that if the city took the responsibility of banishing the Jews, every hope would vanish of ever getting back from the Emperor the considerable sum of purchase money. Despite this, numerous Councillors were of the opinion that it would be better to relinquish the money and in this question exclusively "consider the benefit of the citizens and the whole city and Christian love and scruples of conscience." The Jews now tasted some samples of Christian love. Under penalty of a fine of twenty florins they were forbidden to take one step outside of the ghetto throughout the whole of Passion Week. A heavy fine was imposed on one Jew who had harbored a Christian woman in his home. Another, who tried to get permission to stay in one of the Frankfort villages, was flatly refused, though the Council had formerly taken no offense at the idea. When the Jews petitioned to be allowed to dispense during the fair season with wearing their pointed hats because it would expose them to all sorts of mockery and derision and even abuse by the strangers at the fair, they were denied.

While the Council was contriving and issuing such vexatious orders in regard to the Jews, the common people would have preferred to solve the question in their own way. At that time there again cropped up all the old tales of the murder of children for ritual purposes, the desecration of the Host, and scoffing at the Cross. If they found credence with the princes and clergy, they were even more readily believed by

the uneducated man of the people. A quite unimportant occurrence, an attempt to raise the excise on beer, caused tumults, which should have been an indication to those versed in affairs that in Frankfort as elsewhere a ferment was obscurely working in the masses. The rage of the people was directed against the clergy of St. Bartholomew's and against the Jews, who had in fact had nothing to do with the increase of the excise tax. A third massacre of the Jews nearly ensued, but this time the Council was able to soothe the multitude.

In the meanwhile the plans of the Mayence group took definite shape. They called a conference in Frankfort of all the neighboring estates to discuss whether and how they might relieve themselves of their Jews. For a while no binding decision was reached. Only the lords of estates and two-by-four princes that had power over a single Jew or at most three Jews were in favor of immediate strict banishment. The rest sought evasions and pretexts. A second conference was called in Frankfort to which, to the utmost confusion of the leaders, representatives were never sent. The Emperor's attention had in the meanwhile been called to these machinations by letters of complaint from the Jews, and he had taken an interest in them. Hampered as he was by the estates of his realm, whose constant opposition made positive achievement on his part practically impossible, he was certainly not going to allow them to prejudice his right to dispose absolutely of his serfs of the chamber. He therefore forbade the meeting in Frankfort. For the next hundred years the

Jews in the old Imperial city as well as those of the southwestern portion of Germany generally were no longer threatened with banishment, which does not mean that they led a quiet, care-free life.

In the year 1519 Maximilian I died. His grandson, Charles I of Spain, called Charles V as German Emperor, was his successor. German Jewry probably regarded his election with fears of evil. He had spent a large part of his youth in an anti-Jewish atmosphere, in Spain, from which country the Jews had shortly before been expelled. There religious fanaticism continued to battle against the Marranos (those who had outwardly become converts, but had secretly remained Jews) and against the Mohammedans, and there funeral pyres blazed for heretics. The anxiety of the Jews was not justified in the event. Not that the Emperor had a warm heart for the Jews, but he offered them no enmity. His expressed wish was "that they might peacefully stay and dwell in the Holy German Empire." He regularly confirmed their charters, and in times of danger, as in the Schmalkald War, took their part. He was influenced in his Jewish policy by the most prominent Jew of his time, Josel of Rosheim, who, as has been said, had stood high in Maximilian's regard. He was a man of rare purity of motive and distinction of character, whose whole life was spent in sacrifice for his oppressed coreligionists.

The Emperor came to Germany in 1520, but did not stay long. He remained away eight years, eight fateful years for the country. With the religious struggles of the period of the Reformation came a

revolutionary awakening of social and economic ideas. They had long been brewing among the peasantry, who feared further economic depression. In the year 1525 the so-called Peasants' War broke out. This war was not conducted with a well disciplined army under one head, but was wild and planless, waged by separate groups of peasants. The movement strongly affected all who suffered from economic oppression. It was hoped that the existing order might be shattered and a new one built on its ruins. The focus of the movement was in south Germany. From the start the Jews were in jeopardy, because, as has long been recognized, it was customary to make them suffer for the faults of others. In Alsace as well as in Franconia they were protected by the strong arm, the unfailing energy of Rabbi Joselmann, but in Frankfort in that rude period the Jewish community was twice threatened with serious danger. The first time was when the artisans and proletariat in the city, infected with the unrest of the peasants in the Odenwald and Spessart, rose to overturn the mismanagement of the Council. Among the various complaints made against the authorities was that they abetted the usury of the Jews. The readiness of the Council to accede to the wishes of the rioters saved it from the storm and moderated the movement. The points yielded by the Council included some that concerned the Jews, especially in regard to pawnbroking. So for a time the Jews were free from attack.

The second danger that threatened the Jews was a matter of life and death. When Götz von Berlichin-

gen led the rioting peasants of the Odenwald and Spessart as far as Aschaffenburg and approached the city, the radical elements, "the wicked knaves," regained the upper hand within the walls. As soon as the peasants appeared before the city, there was talk of falling upon the clergy and the Jews and massacring them. The Council was perfectly aware of the extent of the danger and sought to win the more thoughtful elements in the guilds over to its side. Despite all its representations it was not entirely successful. Some evaded giving an answer. Others, such as the smiths, the purse-makers, the fishermen and the hatters, wished to be faithful to their oaths as citizens and support the Council with heart and soul, but, in case of an attack on the clergy and Jews, they refused to defend them. Fortunately for the Jews no attack was made on the city. The united stand of the lords and princes against the peasants, the defeat of the latter in various parts of the district in which uprisings had occurred, forced them to withdraw. This crippled the strength of the revolutionary party within the city walls. The Council was again master of the situation. It hastily recalled all the privileges it had granted. In all departments earlier conditions prevailed. The Jews were relieved of the restrictions on their pawnbroking business.

In 1530 Charles V at last returned to Germany flushed with a victor's pride. He had waged so many wars and won so many battles that he believed he could with little loss dispose of the Protestants, who were presenting their claims more and more vigor-

ously. He did not succeed. In 1546 the Schmalkald War broke out. The Jews of the Empire, including the community of Frankfort, with their director Josel at their head, prayed for the success of the Imperial arms, for the Emperor had, especially in recent years, shown himself full of insight and favor toward them. Though the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages had in general not been particularly kindly toward the Jews, yet in the course of centuries there had always been popes and bishops that displayed comprehension of their distressing situation. Only a short while before, in 1545, in the Imperial Diet at Regensburg, an exalted prince of the church had by his manly intercession hindered the banishment that had been planned.

But from the new Protestant church, growing in strength, nothing was to be hoped. The Jews of the Empire had probably followed Luther's appearance and progress with inward sympathy and with many a hope. In his early pronouncements we repeatedly find annihilating criticism of the previous treatment of the Jews and the exhortation not to act so unkindly toward them. The words he wrote in the year 1523 are often quoted: "The fools, popes, bishops . . . . . the donkey-headed dolts, behaved to the Jews in such a way that any good Christian would rather have become a Jew, etc. . . They treated the Jews like dogs, abused them, robbed them of their property, etc. . ." These expressions caused the Jews to entertain the hope that their long history of suffering had so deeply affected the Reformer's warm heart that he would raise his powerful voice on their behalf. But

the Jews judged Luther amiss. They were of no interest to him as poor oppressed fellow-beings. He considered them possible converts. When he saw that despite all his friendly words they remained in their old "error," he turned away from them disappointed and angry at their "obstinacy." Indeed, he grew to be their bitterest enemy. In his view, the "wretches and robbers" as he now called them, deserved no sympathy, but ought to be treated with the greatest ignominy.

Luther did not come into personal contact with the Jews of Frankfort as he did with those of Worms, where he had had a religious disputation with some individuals among them. He had twice passed through Frankfort on his way to the Imperial Diet in Worms in 1521, and had stayed there a short while as the guest of several patrician families. On these occasions, he does not seem to have become acquainted with any Jews, and he probably did not visit the ghetto at all. However, he was struck, as was every stranger, by the large numbers of Jews on the streets, who were at that time outwardly distinguished by the yellow rings they wore as badges. He did not therefore know the condition of the Frankfort Jews by his own observation, but the fact that they enjoyed effective protection and high respect on the part of the Council obviously reached his ears, for in his essay "Concerning the Jews and their Lies," he says: "If he were in the place of the gentlemen of the Frankfort Council, he would far rather pull out their tongues from their throats . . . burn their synagogues, destroy their houses, put them into sheds

and stables like gypsies, take away their prayerbooks and Talmud, forbid the rabbis to teach on pain of death," and so forth. So the Jews had nothing to hope from Luther and his followers. It was no wonder that they continued to take shelter under "the great eagle," so long as the city of Frankfort, which in 1537 had officially introduced the Reformation, was a member of the League of Schmalkald and remained loyal to its obligations as a member of the League in the war. It aided the Landgrave Philipp of Hesse with arms, and gave money to pay troops of the League. The sums of money had to be raised in part among the Catholic clergy and the Jews.

The war in south Germany was short and decisive. The lack of unified leadership in the armies of the League and the change of Duke Moritz of Saxony to the Imperial side made Charles the master of south Germany by the end of the year 1546. At the end of December after the Emperor's lansquenets (mercenary foot soldiers) had stormed Darmstadt, they approached the walls of Frankfort. The citizenry, sincerely inclined to Protestantism, would probably have been willing to assume the task of resistance and bear the sufferings of a siege. Not so the Council. It entered into negotiations with the leader of the enemy, Count Büren, and opened the gates of the city to him on December 29. Only then did it send a deputation to the Emperor at Heilbronn, to seek pardon humbly and penitently. It received pardon, but on hard terms. The city had to pay 100,000 gold florins, deliver twelve cannon, and harbor an Imperial garrison for an indefinite period.

At that time the Jews of Frankfort lived in great fear and anxiety. Some thousand wild, unbridled fellows, who could be kept in check only by the strictest discipline, now dwelt in the city. Murder, robbery, rape, abuse of peaceful citizens were the order of the day. Courts-martial were permanently in session in the Römer, as the town-hall is called, and there was no end to the executions that took place. When the sufferings of the Christian population were so great, what fate faced the Jews? In this emergency Rabbi Joselmann proved himself a savior. At the urgent request of the Frankfort Jews, he went to the commandant of the city and in return for 800 gold florins received assurance of protection. It is doubtful whether the money was paid as tribute to the count or was meant for the pay of the garrison. The count and his successors scrupulously kept the promise that was made. The Jews had not the slightest reason to complain of the behavior of the troops. On the contrary, a tolerable relation sprang up between them and the garrison, cemented by the brisk interchange of trade. The rich booty secured by the lansquenets when they took Feuchtwangen and Darmstadt by assault found ready buyers in the ghetto, where the soldiers in turn filled their needs by varied purchases. To all appearances, the lot of the Jews was in those days by way of exception better than that of the Christian population, which groaned under the heavy burden of billeting the soldiers.

The heads of the Frankfort government, made wise by the defeat of the League of Schmalkald, regretted bitterly their departure from their former regular

policy of allegiance to the Emperor. They now returned to their old accustomed ways, and both citizens and Council renewed their oath of fealty to the Emperor, adding the promise never again to join a league of his enemies. They continued to be adherents of Protestantism, but resisted all the wiles of the Protestant princes, even their threats. Threats did not end the matter. In 1552 the conspiracy against Charles burst forth, and soon bitter fighting was renewed. Duke Moritz of Saxony, who had returned to the side of the Emperor's enemies, next undertook the conquest of Frankfort. His attack did not find the city unprepared. An effort was made to put it into good condition for defense. The Jews volunteered to give a considerable sum for the repair of the walls and ramparts, an offer appreciated by the Council. They also shared in the work of making intrenchments. Just as they had been spared five years before, they were again exempt from the burden of billeting soldiers under which the citizens sorely groaned. The Council granted more favors. During the whole siege the Jews were not required to wear their badge, which would have exposed them more than others to the insults and mistreatment of the strange soldiers in town. Again there were hardly any conflicts between the Jews and the lansquenets, although the ghetto gates stood open day and night and allowed the soldiers free passage.

On July 10 the first patrols appeared before the city, and the siege began in earnest, lasting several weeks. During that time the Jewish cemetery was used by the defense troops as a field of operation.

The league of the Protestant princes did not accomplish the end they desired. The besiegers withdrew, and when there was no longer any hostile mercenary to be seen in the region of Frankfort, all, the Jews as well as the rest, breathed more freely. After the religious Peace of Augsburg, 1552, peace reigned in Germany for more than two generations, whereas in the other lands of western Europe blood continued to flow for the faith. External events did not break in rudely upon the existence of the Jews in the Frankfort ghetto, with one exception, an investigation conducted on account of the alleged Jewish conspiracy. The Emperors who succeeded Charles V had like him been relatively mild and sensible toward the Jews. This was true also of Rudolph II. Suddenly, however, during his reign, a great disaster threatened the Jews, particularly those of Frankfort. It is noteworthy that the informer and calumniator to whom the Emperor and his advisers lent their ear was one from their own midst, a Jew born in Frankfort named Löb Kraus. He maintained that the Jews were doing nothing less than plotting against the Emperor and planning to wrest from him the mastery over Germany, and indeed secure for themselves later on mastery over the whole world. We know little about Kraus personally. He had previously followed the calling of butcher in Frankfort, but had managed at the same time to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the Talmud. In his knowledge of Jewish literature he was quite unlike Pfefferkorn. He never became a convert to Christianity, but nourished an undying hatred of his coreligionists the cause of which has not

come to light. His accusations were believed in their absurd entirety, and set on foot innumerable investigations, conferences, hearings, literature for and against, and so on. The affair dragged on several years, but in the end of course nothing incriminating appeared. The records furnish much valuable material for historians of a later day, for they disclose the conditions that existed in the various Jewish communities of Germany, giving a far from happy picture of them. Everywhere there was petty politics; nowhere unity through organization. Obviously then there was no general conspiracy. The Imperial deputies and the church dignitaries making the investigations would never have been convinced of the baselessness of the charges, and the affair would have been prolonged many another year, if a clumsy maneuver of Kraus's had not terminated it in a way not at all desired by him. When he thought the endless legal processes had sufficiently crushed the Frankfort Jews and made them ripe for his designs, he offered his services as mediator, expecting to receive due pay. He wrote letter after letter to Frankfort in this vein. When he found that the letters remained unanswered, he travelled thither himself to accomplish his purpose by word of mouth. The officers of the Frankfort community roundly refused his proffers. The Council also realized that it was dealing with a common blackmailer. It at last took the part of the Jews, and caused a paper to be carefully drawn up in legal terms setting forth the utter baselessness of the charges. And thus the matter ended ingloriously for Kraus.

CHAPTER VI

THE FETTMILCH INSURRECTION (1612-1616)

When the assertion was made that for more than two generations, from 1552 to the beginning of the Thirty Years' War in 1618, peace reigned in Germany, by the word "peace" we meant merely rest from the embroilments of war. Internally, there were animated conflicts, economic in nature. Despite the long years of peace, there was visible retrogression in the general welfare of the people, particularly in the Imperial cities of south Germany. This is not the place in which to explain in detail the causes of the phenomenon. It had begun to be evident early in the century. Here only so much need be said as is essential for the history of the Jews of Frankfort. The great discoveries of bold seamen and the rise of the sea-power of the Netherlands and later of England changed the paths of traffic. The overland trade from Italy over the Alps to the upper German cities languished. The fine flower of those cities slowly withered away. Frankfort, indeed, suffered less than other south German cities, for up to the middle of the sixteenth century trades still flourished there. They were hampered, however, by the strangle-hold of the guilds, and they were continually struggling against the individualistic-capitalistic management of commerce. There was genuine wholesale trade only in the wine business, and it was only when the

fairs were held twice a year that Frankfort afforded the picture of a world center of trade. Nor was industry developed. The leading patrician houses for the most part lived on the rents of their landed estates, and the middle classes, besides pursuing their trades, carried on a considerable amount of farming on land they owned outside the gates of the city.

This economic picture of Frankfort changed almost at a blow when considerable numbers of Calvinists came to the city to settle there in the middle of the sixteenth century. Driven out of the other countries of Europe, particularly the Netherlands, which still groaned under the fanaticism of Philip II, they sought a new home, and at first found Frankfort hospitable. They transplanted their own industries and their highly developed technical skill thither. The trades of silk and cloth weaving soon flourished in the city, and a great impetus was given to the manufacture of gold lace and braid, to dyeing and the cutting of precious stones. That was when the Frankfort fairs acquired the celebrity which they long enjoyed throughout Europe. In connection with the fairs, transactions in money and exchange also throve.

The sudden prosperity of the city and the increased possibility of striking profitable bargains there lured many Jews to Frankfort for permanent settlement. The community, which in 1500 had consisted of one hundred and thirty souls, in 1555 numbered about sixty-two households. At the beginning of the seventeenth century probably three thousand Jews lived

in Frankfort, a large percentage of the total population. Seeing that the space for the ghetto was not enlarged where did all these people find shelter? They simply had to crowd themselves. The Jewish quarter, which in the year 1496 consisted of fourteen houses, boasted in 1610 of one hundred and ninety-seven. Without straining one's imagination, it is easy to picture what lies concealed in these figures. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the street still included enough open spaces to ensure the residents their share of air and sunshine, but in the course of a century it became more and more the scene of martyrdom, a breeding ground for epidemics, a place where dampness, gloom, darkness, and disgusting odors made life a torment. The first step, of course, was to build up all the vacant lots and open spaces, so that there came to be unbroken rows of houses on both sides of the street. Then small back buildings were put up in the yards. When it was found that these did not suffice, the individual houses were divided. The house fronts that had originally been broad became quite narrow, often only seven feet wide. But even this shrinkage of space for the separate dwellings did not make the accommodation sufficient for the marked increase of population. Then the scheme was devised of building new stories to the houses. The upper one always projected much further out than the one below, so that the atmosphere of the street became closer and closer. To be sure, in those days, the Christian population of the wall-encircled German towns also lived crowded together in dark streets. They were not so hungry

for light and air as the people of to-day with their present knowledge of hygiene. Even so, there was an enormous difference between their homes and what went under that name in the Frankfort ghetto.

So long as the city flourished economically and every citizen and tradesman earned a livelihood, no one concerned himself particularly about the excessive growth of the Jewish population. But thanks to the short-sighted policy of the Council, which sucked out the sap of its life, its blossoming time soon passed. The Council began by annoying the Calvinist immigrants with all sorts of mean, petty regulations. The baiting of the fanatic Lutheran clergy put all possible obstacles in the way of the exercise of their religion. The Calvinist preachers were driven out of town. Their schools were closed. From the outset, they had been forbidden to build churches that bore the earmarks of a place of worship. Then came restrictions of trade and commerce, such as excessive taxes on raw silk, compulsory diminution of the number of weavers' looms, etc. The Council could depend, in the passage of these regulations, on the consent of practically the whole population. The patrician families were afraid of the growing influence of the rich merchants from the Netherlands. The economic views of the artisans were even more definitely opposed to the modern method of manufacture. Disgusted by these everlasting vexations and annoyances, the Calvinists, in great numbers, left the city which had become so inhospitable. Neighboring towns more kindly disposed now harvested the fruits of their industry.

Soon after the emigration of the Calvinists, the consequences became perceptible. There was a general decline in business together with a lowering of wages. Several successive years of failing crops increased the depression and produced a higher cost of the necessaries of life. To be sure, in the last third of the sixteenth century, the wealth of the very rich increased, but the middle classes grew poorer, and the lower classes sank into a state of great need and distress. Some were so deeply in debt to the Jews that they had to enter the debtors' prison.

Then it was that the excessive number of the Jews came to be felt as especially grievous and oppressive, and efforts were made to guard against their increase.

The Jews did not suffer nearly so much from the economic crisis as did the Christian population. There is evidence that among the Jews both large and medium fortunes increased in size. Their great energy enabled them to adapt themselves to the changed times. Though all along excluded from the artisans' guilds and from agriculture, they had always dabbled in wholesale commerce, and they had gradually managed to get some branches of trade almost entirely into their own hands; such as, the trade in precious stones and jewels, the precious metals, gold and silver, as well as lead and brass. The mintmasters complained that they had to buy all the precious metals needed for the coinage of money from the Jews. The neighboring princes ordered their silver plate from the Jews. The masters of the ammunition-makers could not execute orders to manufacture small artillery because the

Jews had sold all the requisite metal abroad. The Jews played a much greater rôle, however, in retail than in wholesale trade, which was after all the pursuit of scattered, unusually wealthy individuals. Their retail business originated in their trade in secondhand wares and pledges. However often the artisans and shopkeepers presented petitions against them, however restrictive the terms of the Stättigkeit, the Jews always found a way out. To give but one example. Forbidden to lease shops and stores in the city, they peddled their wares. Travelling through the city streets and the neighboring villages, they soon acquired everywhere a number of steady customers. It is easy to believe what was asserted in the various bills of complaint presented by the Christian tradesmen, that they sought out the inns of Frankfort and offered their wares where distinguished strangers were announced, and that in return for a suitable commission the inn servants gave them valuable hints as to the guests. Moreover the buyers streamed into the ghetto itself. It was thought that desirable purchases could be made more cheaply here than in the city shops. This was indeed the case, both because the goods sold by the Jews were in part unredeemed pledges and, even more, because their expenses were less than those of the city shopkeepers.

The petty warfare always waged by the shopkeepers and artisans against the Jews even in good times now became more acute and more ill-natured in this period of depression. The shoemakers and the tailors, the cutlers and the coopers, each group asked that at least the wares in which it was inter-

ested should not be sold by the Jews. The wine and cloth merchants joined the rest. But the assertion that occurred in the petitions again and again, that the competition of the Jews must ultimately compass the complete ruin of the guilds and shopkeepers, did not carry special conviction to the Council. Now and then, to be sure, it did punish a Jew for too boldly ignoring the terms of the Stättigkeit, but in general it let well enough alone.

The calling that was in some sort legally assigned to the Jews, money-changing, aroused the enmity of the citizens much more than their intrusion into and their superiority in the trades that were, strictly speaking, forbidden.

In the second half of the sixteenth and in the seventeenth century during the period of the Thirty Years' War, profits of exchange grew greater as the money coined in Germany deteriorated and fell into a state of wretched confusion. Coins too light in weight and false coins flooded the market, made trade extremely difficult, and at the same time raised the prices of all the necessaries of life to a high level. In short, there resulted a situation similar to that experienced nowadays in all lands where the rate of exchange is unfavorable.

As the people suffered grievously under these unwholesome conditions, and as the Jews were foremost in the money market, the latter were supposed to be the cause of the insupportable situation and became the object of general hatred. There was certainly no justice in making Jewry the scapegoat for the miserable conditions that prevailed in the

coinage of money; but the truth is that the Jews had not kept their hands perfectly clean. How could they have been expected to do so when everybody, no matter of what faith or class, tried to "profiteer" by the confusion of the mintage and the uncertainty of money values? The documents we have record many cases of Jews punished for offenses in regard to coins. Within the Jewish communities themselves, methods were sought to combat this type of transgression. It was fully realized what hatred the individual Jewish malefactor brought down upon all Jewry. Various assemblies of rabbis held in Frankfort at the turn of the century occupied themselves with this theme. The heads of the Frankfort community issued special regulations in regard to coins, and set high penalties upon the introduction of prohibited sorts. For instance, they threatened with the ban any who should pay out the "unrighteous rix-dollar of Solms." They further forbade any member of the community, under severe penalty, to have business dealings with the mintmasters of the city.

The Council itself was the chief customer of the Jewish moneychangers. It could not dispense with them in its manipulations, which were not altogether unobjectionable. Essentially this is what happened regularly: The citizens paid most of their taxes in the smaller coins including the smallest. The Council on its part could satisfy the creditors of the city only with money of full value. How did it get out of the dilemma? It asked the Jews to exchange the many thousands of pennies and kreuzer, which it delivered to the ghetto in big baskets, for coins of large denom-

inations of full value. They set the exchange price so low that the Jews suffered great losses and raised strong objections to the transaction. In order in some way to recompense them, it let them have, for a considerable time, without interest, the pennies produced by the taxes, which they could in turn lend at interest. Besides, the Council entrusted the city moneys to the Jews at a more or less high rate of interest, and allowed them to make profitable use of the funds in their business. This reprehensible financial policy of the Council, which the man on the street could not see through, indirectly injured the interests of the citizens and at the same time immeasurably increased their bitterness toward the Jews.

When in the year 1612 the revolution broke out that is known as the "Fettmilch Insurrection," after the name of one of its leaders, the Jews had to pay dearly for being protégés of the Council. Hatred of the Jews, to be sure, was not a cause for the insurrection, but simply a concomitant. As in the case of all other revolutions, the cause was the great and ever-increasing dissatisfaction with economic and political conditions. We have spoken of the severe economic crisis, of crop failures and the rise in prices. The political conditions in Frankfort at that time we do not intend to depict in detail. The government of the city had degenerated into a complete oligarchy, and the small number of patrician families that occupied most of the seats in the Council conducted an administration that was far from model. The city had for a long time suffered from an increasing annual deficit. Public moneys were dissipated in an irre-

sponsible fashion. Upon some of the aristocratic gentlemen of the Council there even rested the suspicion that they had embezzled city funds. The administration of justice also was the cause of many complaints. The magistrates were accused of partiality, venality, and so forth. So inflammable matter piled up, and it is not to be wondered at that a slight occasion sufficed to produce the explosion.

It is not our intention to narrate the very tangled course of the uprising, particularly as it presents inevitably the same picture from the sociological point of view as the great revolutions famous in world-history, that is, the yielding of the moderate elements to the radical groups whose power finally diminishes and ends in reaction. We will dwell only on those occurrences which are bound up with the fate of the Frankfort Jews. We must first for a moment pay attention to the leaders of the movement. The real wire-pullers were derived from the circles of the wealthy Calvinist merchants, who had not forgotten the despicable treatment accorded them by the Council. It was their method to make their money and influence felt from behind the scenes. The foremost representatives of the revolutionary party were the lawyer Nicholas Weitz and Vincent Fettmilch. Weitz was the more intellectual of the two. The reason of his Jew-hatred is plain as day. He was a thoroughly ignoble character, avaricious, open to every sort of bribe. He had forged receipts, and had in tricky ways tried to wrest his promissory notes from his creditors. As his finances were in disorder and he owed great sums to the Jews,

he eagerly sought every opportunity to extort money from them. If at his instigation a regulation unfavorable to the Jews was under consideration, he informed them of it secretly under the hypocritical pretext that his heart was touched by their distress and that he would stand by them—only, of course, for so much cash. An apt saying was current in the ghetto in those days,—"The Melummad (educated man, lawyer) has stormed again; we must bleed ourselves a bit for him, to drive the clouds away."

Vincent Fettmilch was a man of different caliber, inconstant, violent, though not bloodthirsty or cruel. He was not unobjectionable in morals but was not without a certain good nature. In his youth he had wanted to become a scholar, and he possessed some education. For a time he acted as legal adviser in Frankfort. Later he enlisted as a soldier. Finally he married and pursued the humble calling of cake-baker in his home city. His various pursuits had given him a certain knowledge of men, and above all his native eloquence greatly impressed the masses. He was, to be sure, completely devoid of true statesmanship. The other leaders associated with his destiny were even more insignificant than he.

At the very time the revolution broke out, Frankfort was celebrating a festive occasion. In the middle of May 1612 the German electors were meeting in the old election and coronation city in order to elect as successor to Emperor Rudolph II, who had died at the beginning of the year, his brother Mathias. The "guilds, guild-members and other citizens such as were not in guilds" presented a bill of complaints

to the Council demanding the confirmation of their privileges. Unless this were granted, they could not pledge themselves by oath to provide for the safety of the princes present in the city. At the same time they made a number of demands of an economic nature, and asked that the excessive number of Jews be restricted as well as that the rate of interest allowed them be reduced from 12 per cent to 5-6 per cent, the regulation to have retroactive force, so that interest that had been paid in excess would have to be returned; and, further, that they should not be permitted to borrow money of Christians. They made similar appeals to the Emperor himself and to the electors. By far the greatest part of the petition, handed by Fettmilch and a tailor to Mathias as he was leaving church, was directed against the Jews, "those leeches, which were nourished by the sweat and blood of the citizens," and hauled whole baskets of the city's moneys into the ghetto. What the circumstances really were has been made clear. In conclusion, the expectation was expressed that the Emperor would certainly take "the Jewish yoke" from off the shoulders of the citizens. However, the Emperor made no answer whatever, but departed from the city as early as June 23, his stay having been made unpleasant by the dissensions of the Council and the citizens. The situation began to grow tense. Dissatisfaction with the Council increased. Riots in front of the town-hall were the order of the day. The more thoughtful elements however still had the upper hand and put through the election of a committee, consisting of 130 mem-

bers, which was to plead the cause of the citizens in law-abiding fashion. The committees composed of both members and non-members of guilds included also some of the Dutch reformers. By a stormy entry into the town-hall on July 3, 1612, it forced the Council to publish the privileges. It was thought that this would clarify the conditions upon which the Jews were to be tolerated. The committee contented itself at first with copying and studying the privileges, but it soon became plain that it no longer held the reins in its hands. The masses heeded it only when they pleased. Whenever they wanted to put through some wish of theirs, a tumultous mob was gathered and the threat made that "it would go ill with anyone who did not do as they desired." Soon the point was reached when the citizens took matters into their own hands, occupied the walls, marched through the city in patrols by night, and barricaded the streets with chains, as if they feared an attack by the hireling soldiers of the Council.

In complete contrast to its usual policy, the Council in its weakness sought backing of the Emperor, who promised help and appointed two commissioners to clear matters up. But the citizens also sought the ear of the Emperor, and sent emissaries of their own to Vienna to portray the situation according to their views. They wished, above all, to secure an early decision, acceptable to them, in regard to the Jewish question. They were referred to the Imperial Commission with the injunction that, before it met, the citizens were not to disturb the peace between Christians and Jews. The people

gave little heed to this. Why should they? Even the clergy, who by their calling should certainly have aimed at peace, incited their hearers against the Jews from their pulpits. By August, 1612, the latter were so insulted and molested that they hardly ventured to appear on the streets of the city and still less transact business there. Naturally many of their debtors took advantage of the changed times and circumstances and refused to meet their obligations. In the meantime, the Imperial deputies arrived, but they did not alter the attitude of the guilds a whit. On the contrary, they determined to envenom the life of the Jews in the city completely by a series of new regulations. In October they decided that no guild member should buy meat of a Jew "while oxen were being slaughtered." Similarly, no baker should deliver baked wares to Jewish dealers. The Council took good care not to intervene on behalf of the Jews. Aware of its own mismanagement and the many justified complaints against it, it welcomed a scapegoat.

What was there for the Jews to do but beg on their part for help from the Emperor? Sensible of their innocence, they declared themselves ready to render account to anyone who had claims or complaints to bring against them. The people's committee did not wait long. In November it handed to the Imperial deputies a comprehensive bill of complaints, forty folio pages in print. It reckoned up everything with which the Jews were charged, and culminated in the plea to banish the "godless mob" from the city altogether. Every silly tale ever told about the Jews was revived in this all-embracing document; as, that

they were informers and traitors and sided with the Turks; that their books contained calumnies against the Christian faith; that they stole Christian children and slew them for ritual purposes. Chiefly the document inveighed against the usury of the Jews and their business methods in general. For all these reasons the commissioners were asked to banish the Jews from the city and its domain forever, as had been done by other God-fearing governments. When they were banished—and this is doubtless the main object of the petitioners—their property, acquired by unrighteous methods, should be turned into the city treasury, and the sums swelled by false practices should be deducted from the actual debt. The committee must have felt that the complaints were too general in nature to have the desired effect. It therefore handed another plea in to the Council, making more specific charges against the Jews. It is, of course, impossible to enter into detail concerning the contents of this comprehensive document, consisting of several hundred articles. Characteristically, the competition of the Jewish with the Christian artisans and tradesmen again figured as the first grievance. Many cases of breach of contract were cited. One hundred and fifty-one articles were concerned with cases in which high interest or interest on interest had been taken. It is noteworthy that the heads of the Jewish community are charged with having punished some of their own members for dishonorable business dealings, regardless of the penalty previously inflicted upon them by the Council. This was regarded not as proof of their sense of justice, but of their contempt

for authority. Several of the articles dealt with the alleged partiality of the Council for the Jews. As proof, they instanced the facts that the Council had confiscated the "Judenspiegel" (Mirror of the Jews), a book extraordinarily hostile to the Jews, and had had the Jewish painting on the Main bridge covered shortly before the Imperial election. This picture represented Jews in highly obscene relations with a pig. It was further alleged that the Council had given aid to their superstitious religion by allowing them the privilege of fetching greenery from the city forest for their festive booths.

In their rejoinder, the Jews contradicted most of these points. They conceded unequivocally only one, —that they had taken more than 5 per cent in interest. To be sure, it was quite unfair to tax the whole Jewish community with usury, for many, indeed the very wealthiest and most distinguished, refrained from such base financial practices, and, "on the contrary, dealt honorably in only the rates of exchange common to both Christians and Jews." It was, moreover, well known that the Jews took more than 8-9 per cent interest only from the more uncertain debtors. Besides on account of the great risk involved, they had to protect themselves by an especially high rate of interest in cases when they lent money on a mere note of hand or when they were defrauded by bankrupts, assignments and so forth.

Meanwhile, the committee, which had at first led the insurrectionists, was deposed by its own followers. The guilds charged that "it did not duly execute its business; and that the longer it dragged affairs out

by unnecessary running around and eating and drinking, the more dangerous the situation became." A new committee was appointed, and entered upon its duties on November 26. The Council and the Imperial commissioners recognized it as the representative of the citizens. The result of the negotiations then entered upon was that on December 21 a new "citizens' agreement" was promulgated which both parties promised solemnly to keep. The commissioners regarded their task as done, and departed early in January, 1613, after the proclamation of a decree granting general amnesty.

The agreement consisted of seventy-one articles, and formed the basis of a new constitution involving thoroughgoing changes in practically every department of the commonwealth. Details cannot be dwelt upon, but so much may be said, that the patrician families were deprived of their monopoly of the seats in the Council, and these were increased in number by eighteen. The city treasury was thereafter to lend the citizens money at 5 per cent for silver and gold pledges, in that way, no doubt, making them independent of the Jews. So far as the Jews were concerned, the commissioners regarded the complaints of the guilds as justified in two respects—their excessive numbers and the high rate of interest they asked. So it was decided "that in regard to their number a certain regulation should be made." The rate of interest was for a while fixed at 8 per cent.

The Jews were not satisfied with the rather wide-meshed structure of the paragraphs relating to themselves, but they hoped that with the return of calmer

spirits, the voices of their enemies would become silent. The tranquillity that had been generally expected did not ensue. Mistrust of the old regime was too deep-rooted. The whole Catholic and Reform portions of the population were opposed to the new constitution. No hearing had been given to the grievances and wishes of these two groups in regard to their political and religious rights. The malcontents furthered with all their strength the plans of that little group of rebels, who prospered only so long as unrest lasted, since they received good pay from the committee for their activity as agitators. They were chiefly Weitz, Fettmilch, now appointed "director," his brother, and others. Without authorization from the freemen of the city, they formed another committee, the third, which was completely terrorized by the "upper table" with Fettmilch at its head. Secretly guided by Weitz, by the Dutchman Bernoulli, etc., he ruled the city, appeared daily in the town-hall, and controlled all governmental dealings. He had purposely refrained from seeking election to the Council, which would have been easy for him to secure. He preferred to rely on the lower classes. His influence, however, lasted only so long as he fulfilled their wishes. These included a desire for drastic action against the Jews. So in the committee and the guild rooms, Fettmilch stirred up the Jew-hatred of the artisans anew. To the masses of the people, naturally, he did not read the Jewish privileges; but he could not deny himself the satisfaction of going into the ghetto one Saturday, standing on the place in front of the synagogue, and reading to

the Jews as they went by to the services certain passages of the well-known document bearing on pledges. Soon the Jews did not feel secure in their own quarter. One Sunday, March 14, 1613, a mob of artisans forced their way in, threw stones at the windows, and committed other disorders. The Council afforded no protection, for it was weak and divided against itself. The new, revolutionary members, hangers-on of Weitz, were set against everything proposed by the old members, and the line-up was the same in the Jewish question. Neither the Emperor nor the commissioners seemed to care particularly about the disputes going on in Frankfort.

The condition of the Jews grew more and more wretched. Their opponents circulated the report that in a few days the Jewish quarter would be plundered. On the evening of May 11, general panic reigned in the ghetto. Many Jews fled in the garb of Christians. Those remaining hastily closed the gates and stood guard together with the Christians dwelling in the neighborhood, whose houses would have been endangered by a conflagration in the ghetto. Even though it was a false alarm this time, still it indicated of what the enemies of the Jews would be capable. Fettmilch was clever enough to understand how to turn the situation to his purposes. He explained to the Council that the embitterment of the populace was such that a violent outbreak was to be feared, and that he would be unable to restrain "the common man" long. At the same time he remarked that an acceptable solution of the Jewish question would be the best way to renew confidence

in the authorities among the citizens. The view that it would not do to hazard its own existence for the sake of the Jews now gained the upper hand in the Council. The declaration was therefore made that in principle there was agreement with the idea that they should be expelled, and preliminary steps toward this end were taken; that is, so and so many expert opinions were called for and a Jewish commission was appointed.

The commission soon set to work, and despite the threats of Fettmilch and his following arrived at the conclusion that it would be difficult to carry through, all at once, the complete expulsion of the Jews. It was in favor of "moderation in proportion to the property owned;" that is, that the Stättigkeit should be refused to all who had less than 20,000 florins. If the number to be banished on this basis proved to be too great, then a reduction of the amount required might be made to 15,000 florins. Those allowed to remain would have to advance to the city a tenth of their property at an interest of 5 per cent. In turn, they would be allowed thereafter to ask only 5 per cent on pledges and good security, and 6 per cent on bare credit. Jewish newcomers would not be accepted. Those who were tolerated would be required once a week to listen to an exposition of the word of God by an Evangelical preacher, "to which they must quietly pay attention."

Despite the fact that the new decisions were to have been kept secret, Fettmilch spread them among the populace in writing. They thereupon went storming to the town-hall and demanded the imme-

diate exclusion of all Jews except twenty families. This tumultuous action did not meet with full success, but the "moderation" policy was speedily put into effect. Sixty of the poorest Jews received orders to leave the city. Among them were especially many school teachers, some of whom reported property of the value of only 10 florins. Before leaving, they had to pay various taxes or fines as well as an emigration fee, 10 per cent of their property, and satisfy their Christian creditors.

At the beginning of the year 1614 the Emperor at last gave official confirmation to the citizens' agreement. At the same time the deputies gave notice that there would be a strict investigation of all those who in the previous year had disregarded the Emperor's orders. The radical party particularly feared such an investigation. To prevent it they left no measures untried in the Council. They descended even to threats of general massacre. The Council itself objected to having judges from the outside start inquisitions within its precincts. For once its wishes agreed with those of the insurgents. This state of mind brought about a compromise in January 1614. Since the parties in dispute made mutual concessions, peace seemed finally to be restored in the city. On February 3 a thanksgiving service followed by the *Te deum* was held, and one and all streamed into the church.

Those who looked beneath the surface did not regard the peace as genuine, and they proved to be right. The radical party had for a short time been intimidated, but it soon raised its head again. The

ringleaders had not been silenced. On the contrary, the period of violence only now set in. On May 5 the masses, incited by their leaders, overpowered the members of the Council and locked them in the town-hall. The latter fearing the worst for their fate grew tractable, and after a few days declared themselves willing to give up their seats in the Council, whereupon they were granted their freedom. Meanwhile Fettmilch had control of affairs, kept the gates of the city closed, and let no one in or out without a pass.

Upon receiving news of these acts of violence, the Commissioners posted a "Peace Proclamation" in the city, and placed under Imperial protection the persons of the Council members forced to resign, the Catholic clergy and the Jews, till such time as the old Council should again be installed. Meanwhile conditions in the city became more and more unendurable. Agents of the Landgrave of Hesse reported that in Frankfort "no one, especially no wealthy person, could be pronounced secure of his person, his life, and his property." They considered the position of the Jews the most perillous; "for Kantor (one of the most zealous of Fettmilch's partisans) and others intimated that a beginning had been made with the aristocrats (Junkers); when that work was accomplished, then out with all the Jews." The latter certainly recognized the danger that threatened them, and tried promptly to move their possessions out of the city to places of security. But the guard stationed at the ghetto gates allowed none of the property of the Jews to be taken away. Even what had been concealed in boats on the Main was fetched

and taken to the "Room of the Smiths," the meeting place of the committee. Besides, by all sorts of threats the sum of one thousand florins was extorted from them as "protection-money". At the instance of the commissioners who hoped thus to strengthen their authority, an Imperial herald entered the city on July 26, to deliver a mandate concerning guilds and citizens. It threatened those who continued riot and insubordination with the ban of the Empire, confiscation of property, etc. So that the innocent should not suffer with the guilty the Emperor ordered every one of the citizens from the highest to the lowest class to put his signature to a public declaration dissociating himself from the leaders of the insurrection.

The more thoughtful portion of the population welcomed the mandate with joy, as did the eighteen councillors still in office, who had originally been followers of Fettmilch. They had all grown weary of the brawl that had lasted for years, and were satisfied with such fulfilment of their demands as had been accomplished. As they expressed it, they wanted to "obey" (*parieren*). Not so the guild members, who remained faithful to Fettmilch. He represented to them that the mandate was forged and was foisted upon them by the Commissioners. The Emperor himself, he maintained, adhered to their cause. There need be no anxiety on the score of the Jews if they promised the Emperor from twenty to forty thousand florins.

When the Commissioners became aware that the guild-masters were not thinking of "obeying," they

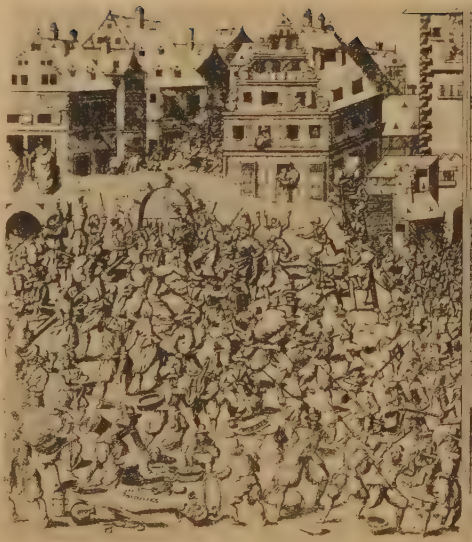
tried to win the journeymen over and stir up differences between them and their masters. The masters invited the journeymen to the Smiths' Room, where they were given a banquet of rich food and drink. Then, when they were heated with wine, they were inflamed against the deputies, "who were planning to make fools of them," etc. The inflammatory speeches had the desired effect. The journeymen together with the masters went to the place in front of the inn in which the deputies were staying. There, with threats, they demanded a public apology, since their "honor had been insulted without cause." The deputies had to yield. The next day the desired apology was publicly posted in various places. Fettmilch and his following now saw that he had regained the upper hand entirely. The deputies and their servants were kept prisoners in their inn, and so were completely in the power of the radical party.

Suddenly there rang out the cry: Plunder the Judengass! Later investigations have never made clear by whom it was started. Indirect responsibility rests upon Weitz and Fettmilch. At all events, it is certain that when Fettmilch's attention was called to the excitement among the journeymen, he remarked that they were invited to the Smiths' Room at four o'clock when they might look further into matters. When the journeymen actually turned up at the appointed place, not a member of the committee tried to check their intemperate speeches. On the contrary, what was said was,—Let them do what they cannot help doing. Together all went to the ghetto.

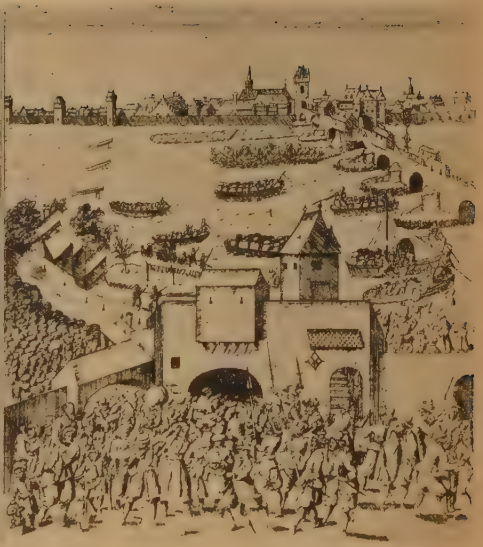
Rumor had come to the Jews on August 21 that their quarter would be pillaged. They passed the day in the greatest anxiety. They thought it possible to avert the calamity by prayer and fasting as well as by suitable measures of defense. On the afternoon of August 22, most of the inhabitants of the ghetto were in the synagogue, always their place of refuge in times of danger and distress. At five o'clock, mobs making wild noises approached the Bornheim gate, one of the entrances to the Jewish quarter. They found it locked and barricaded. On the other side stood a large portion of the Jewish community armed with halberts and swords, ready to dispute the entry of the assailants. Warned by friendly Christians, some Jews had succeeded in making their escape from the quarter beforehand, and had found protection and shelter in the city proper. A long-winded poem, "The Song of Vincent," dealing with these events, particularly mentions an "excellent" councillor who had taken some sixty of the unfortunates, among them ten women in childbed, into his house and his large garden, and who had emphatically refused every reward offered him for his humanity. Most of the women and children had fled to the cemetery, where, in fear and trembling, they awaited events. The ghetto gate withstood all efforts to batter it down. Many of the attackers who ventured too near were wounded by stones hurled by the Jews. Hour after hour passed in fear and excitement. Two Jews managed to make their way to the committee and the older burgomaster, and on bended knees begged for help. Both gave the answer that aid was impos-

sible. Moreover the assurance was given that there was no danger; it was "only a running to and fro, so to speak."

At ten o'clock in the evening the Jews were still offering resistance. The raging masses became more and more impatient. Fettmilch was ready to shoot from two cannon on the walls when a man succeeded in penetrating into the quarter by going round the gate. Carpenters had knocked in the clay and frame walls of a house next to the gate, and a mob streamed though this opening. The Jews turned from the gate to the point now threatened. Some of those who had forced their way in were armed with muskets, and urged the Jews to lay down their weapons saying that they had come to give protection. The Jews trusted their assurance and withdrew. At once the barricades were removed and the gates were opened wide to a mob lusting for booty. With yells it rushed in. In the midst of the rabble was Fettmilch "with his staff of office," spurring the looters on to acts of violence. Several citizens who took the part of the Jews were reviled and threatened. The latter had at first tried to defend themselves with their halberts and spears, but when they saw that some of the rabble had guns they relinquished all thought of defense. Some fled to their houses. Some betook themselves to the cemetery whither they had already hastily taken all their valuable personal possessions. The mob let the Jews flee. They thirsted for booty, not for battle. They beat down doors of houses and rooms with crowbars and axes. They broke open chests and trunks, and stole the contents.



Sacking of the Ghetto in 1614



Departure of the Jews, Aug. 23

The iron chests to be found in practically every Jewish home exercised the utmost fascination for them, for it was supposed that in them would be found promissory notes and pledges. The most insignificant objects also found their admirers. Many respectable Christian housewives put in good work. The tin vessels and the bedding especially appealed to their practical sense. What they could not pack up and take away with them they destroyed or rendered unfit for use. Fat and meal were spilled on the floor. Walls, windows, and doors were battered. It was a dreary orgy. The manifestation most painful to the Jews was the violence directed against their holy books. Many were burned in a huge bonfire, used to roast meat that had been stolen. Nor was the synagogue spared. The ark in which the Torah rolls were kept was defiled in the vilest way. The greatest greed was displayed by the heads of the insurrection, above all by Fettmilch with his wife and children and servants. He had his booty hauled to his house in little carts. In token of their appreciation, because he had helped them to such good things, for there were many to whom the loot meant substantial enrichment, the crowd honored him with a cask of wine stolen from the Jews. In some cases it was said that the value of the booty was 1400 florins. Of others it was said that "they could not have built their houses if they had not had the Jews' street."

Far into the morning, for thirteen hours in all, the plundering band continued their disorders. Neither the Council nor the committee made an effort to check the rabble. To be sure, the committee had

placed a guard at the gates of the Jewish quarter, but this was a measure of pure mockery, for the fellows placed there got drunk on the wine of the Jews and made common cause with the looters. Only when the fear was roused that the unbridled avarice of the populace would not stop at the property of the Jews did the peaceable elements of the city begin to take steps toward their protection. Signs of danger increased perceptibly. At the outbreak of the disorders, many of the richest citizens had fled to neighboring cities. The more courageous, however, some on horseback, armed themselves and gathered about the younger burgomaster. In short space of time the Jewish quarter was cleared. To these armed forces the mob did not offer the least resistance, clear proof that if the necessary energy had been displayed at the outset the looting could have been prevented altogether.

Even at this juncture, the Council did nothing to protect the Jews, who were left completely exposed to the whims of Fettmilch and his fellows. He and his companions had hunted up as many Jews as possible in the city and gathered them in one place. "Like cattle" they were driven to the cemetery to join their fellow-sufferers who had spent the whole night there in the greatest anxiety. Fettmilch surrounded the cemetery with guards so that flight was impossible.

With the heads of the committee about him, followed by an armed crowd, he himself appeared before the gate of the cemetery, jeered at his victims, boasted that he was their new Haman, but that

among them there was no pious man like Mordecai. The crowd raged, and the terror of the Jews locked in their cemetery increased. Single voices might be heard calling for the massacre of all the Jews. Others shrank from butchery and were in favor of expulsion. With the outcome uncertain, not knowing which opinion would prevail, the Jews prepared themselves for death. They put on their shrouds, and said the prayers for the dying. But Fettmilch was not bloodthirsty. Expulsion would satisfy him. In the name of the committee he revoked the Stättigkeit and ordered them to leave the city. When the wretched folk saw that he at least did not seek their lives, whereas the mob with their passions inflamed and whipped into a frenzy could not be trusted, a few threw themselves at his feet and implored him to let them depart at once. After refusing them for a while, he finally granted them the right to leave at one o'clock in the afternoon. The Council had remained totally inactive throughout, and so by silence had given consent to the proceedings.

The refugees, reckoned at 1380 persons, in long files, escorted by armed citizens on both sides, moved through the little gate that led to the Main. For taking with them the remnant of their goods they had to pay an unusually high export tax. They either carried their possessions themselves or paid Christians generously to remove them. That friendly citizens kept a large portion for them in their own homes was evidence that hatred of the Jews was not so universal as the committee had always represented it to be.

The refugees must have left the city with heavy hearts. To be sure, it had not been a kindly home, but a home it had been, a place where their dead lay buried, and where their ancestors had lived for centuries. Their holy writings had been scattered and desecrated. Most of their wealth had been lost. Yet they were not without hope, for they had life. The history of Frankfort did not have to chronicle a third massacre of the Jews. At the Main ways parted. One group wandered on foot beyond the borders of the Frankfort domain. Another sailed up the Main to Offenbach and Hanau; another down the river to Höchst. They boarded the boats with some trepidation, for on the bridge over the river a curious crowd had gathered, among them some provided with firearms. The Jews were afraid they might be fired upon, and, indeed, this did happen at Offenbach.

The Emperor's patience was at length exhausted. He now determined to proceed with relentless severity. Even before it had been possible for him to hear of the pillage of the Jewish quarter and the election of the new members of the Council, he outlawed Vincent Fettmilch and his two most intimate companions. The ban was to include all "who might give them aid, encouragement, shelter, lodging, and entertainment." The Council, however, lacked the courage to arrest the outlaws. Fettmilch still had numerous followers among the masses, ready to abuse the Imperial herald that trasmitted the decree of outlawry. The Council did not dare post the mandate. Nevertheless, the leaders of the insurrection

realized that their power was dying. Despite the terrorism they exercised, one guild after the other deserted and "obeyed." Even so, no one ventured to lay hands on Fettmilch until, at the end of November, a member of the Council, Hans Martin Baur by name, summoned up courage. With several strong men to help he forced his way into the tavern where Fettmilch and a number of his fellows were drinking, and arrested him despite the resistance he offered. He was placed in the Bornheim Tower, but was released by his followers, who escorted him to his home in triumph. They erected barricades and prepared for defense. However, when Baur approached at the head of a crowd of armed citizens, all idea of resistance speedily vanished. To make sure that there could be no further attempts at rescue, Fettmilch and his comrades, Weitz among them, were taken to Aschaffenburg, where they remained till the end of the legal proceedings.

This revolutionary movement had started in a healthy opposition, easy to understand, to unjust political and economic conditions, but like so many other revolutions it was shattered by the false, short-sighted radicalism of inept leaders. The old Council again took up the reins of government that had slipped from its hands and held them more firmly than before. The rebelliousness of the masses disappeared. A period of reaction set in.

Regrettable as this might be for the development of the city as a whole, to the Jews that had been driven from their homes it signified a favorable turn of events. Their hope that they would be allowed to

return forthwith was not fulfilled. The citizens seemed to think that never again would the ghetto quarter harbor Jews. So, with easy minds, they carried off their houses to use the material for their own building purposes. Finally a sharp rescript of the commissioners put an end to this work of destruction. They demanded that the street be completely restored, that the stolen property be returned to the Jews or compensation be paid. The Council was naturally not ready to carry out the orders of the commissioners at once. But the latter were unyielding. In August, 1615, a year after their banishment, the Council delivered to the heads of the community the keys of the ghetto as well as of the synagogue, "which they wished to restore in God's name." In addition, the right to permanent residence was offered to the Jews and urged upon them. The Jews, however, did not consider conditions in Frankfort at all secure as yet, and dreaded danger to life and person there. Hence no one wanted to be the first to return. The officers of the community, therefore, selected by lot forty families who should go in advance to attend to the task of making the street habitable. In September they moved back.

Before the whole community was solemnly installed, the trial of the leaders of the insurrection had to be completed, the sentence passed, and the execution accomplished. By February, 1616, this had been done. As principal offender Fettmilch was executed first, in most horrible fashion, in accordance with the custom of that time. The first two fingers of his right hand were chopped off before he was killed

with a sword, and Christian burial was denied him. His body was quartered, and his head on an iron spike served as a warning decoration on the bridge. His house was torn down. No building was ever to be erected on the place where it had stood. Frankfort citizens are still living who recall having seen in one of the busiest streets of the Old Town, a deserted lot, on which a small column proclaimed the crime of the man who had once lived there. Six more outlaws were similarly executed. Others were scourged and banished from the country. Others again were driven out of the city without being flogged. Among these was Weitz, who had at that time gone over to Catholicism. This probably secured for him the intercession of noble patrons at court or with the Archbishop of Mayence, and so may explain the mildness of the sentence.

On the very day on which the executions took place occurred the official return of the Frankfort Jewish community. The Jews had taken their stand in front of the "Gallows Gate," one of the western gates of the city. Amid the beating of drums and blowing of pipes, with flying banners, divisions of the city infantry and cavalry marched thither. In orderly parade, the Jews were conducted past the place of execution to the entrance to their quarter. At the head of the procession were two wagons. In one, together with household gear, were an aged man with long white beard and a child. In the other was the Imperial coat of arms. When they reached the ghetto, the Jews stood in a circle. The leader of the march fastened the coat of arms to the three gates—

three eagles painted on metal with the legend: "*Röm. Kays. Majestät und des h. Reiches Schutz;*" that is, "Protection of His Roman Imperial Majesty and the august Empire." Then he read the new Stättigkeit with all its provisions, repealing those that had previously been in force. The ghetto gates were then opened, and, to the accompaniment of the trumpeter's gay tunes, the Jews all sought their old dwellings.

In memory of the time of suffering they had lived through and their unexpected joyful return the community appointed three memorial days, two fasts and one festival of rejoicing.

The new Stättigkeit was published in printed form. In comparison with the earlier ones, it had very significant innovations, some that were advantageous to the Jews. It is noteworthy that the decree came not from the Council, but from the Imperial commissioners, and that it placed the Jews directly under Imperial protection, as indicated by the new legends on the ghetto gates. The most important change, however, was that the Stättigkeit could no longer be recalled. The protection formerly granted for only three years was now secured for all time, a highly significant step forward. The disabling, depressing sense of insecurity as to the immediate future vanished. It was possible for a Jew to feel that he had a right to his home. Among others there was one very harsh passage in the Stättigkeit. Not only was the ghetto shut off as before, but it was decreed that thereafter there might not be more than five hundred Jewish householders in number; that annually no

more than six alien Jews might be received, and at most twelve couples be permitted to marry.

Reparation for the losses and damages sustained by the Jews, insisted upon by the Imperial commissioners, proceeded less smoothly than their return. The citizens resisted giving joint security. Though right was on their side, the Jews did not want to draw the bow too tight and risk stirring up new conflicts. Negotiations continued until 1618 and then petered out. The total losses of the Jews were estimated at 175,919 florins, of which probably only the smallest part was paid back to them.

While outward conditions were improving and growing more secure for the Jews, within the ghetto itself a ferment was stirring. Disputes over the constitution of the community began, which may be regarded as a reflex and as consequences of the Fettmilch insurrection. They were ended temporarily, not finally, by the fact that other troubles threatened all who lived on German soil. The sad period of warfare known to history as the "Thirty Years War" had opened.

CHAPTER VII

THE THIRTY YEARS WAR AND THE SECOND HALF OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE great war brought suffering of all kinds upon the Jews of Germany, though in general far less than might have been expected. In fact, according to the testimony of the learned Josef Nörlinger Hahn of Frankfort they fared much better than the Christians, so that in many places the latter, at the approach of the enemy, carried their possessions into the homes of Jews for safety. The cause of this kind treatment of the Jews is to some extent to be found in the attitude toward them of Emperor Ferdinand II and his successor. Fanatical as the former Emperor was toward the Protestants, toward the Jews he showed an unexpected mildness. We have more than one decree by him in which he impresses on his officers and soldiers that they must spare their lives and property, not burden them with levies for the war, or with the quartering of soldiers and the like, and altogether shield them as far as possible. It is hardly necessary to point out that the Emperors were swayed not by fairness and humanity but rather by a highly practical consideration, namely, the desire to spare a source of income from which a rich stream still flowed. All the misfortunes that a war involves affected the city of Frankfort and with it the Frank-

fort Jews. At the very outset the troops of the Union (the League of the Protestant Princes) and those of the Liga (the Catholic League) opposed each other in south Germany, and in the year 1620 there was fighting in the neighborhood of Frankfort. In 1622 Duke Christian of Brunswick marched close to the outskirts of the city and mercilessly burned down several villages in the vicinity. But on the very next day, June 29, he was totally defeated at Höchst, in the immediate neighborhood of Frankfort, by Tilly, the Field-marshal of the Liga.

No general, no matter to which of the parties at war he belonged, subsequently forgot that in the city of Frankfort there lived a great community of Jews who were reported to possess boundless wealth. Thus Count Mannsfeld of the Upper Rhine asked upwards of 100,000 thalers of the Jews, but he reduced his demands to 10,000 thalers when Tilly's approach was so near as to become threatening. Duke Christian of Brunswick was somewhat more modest than the Count of Mannsfeld. He demanded only 30,000 thalers "because the Jews by the rules of war were booty in such a campaign." The Council, however, taught him that the Jews were positively not allowed any and everybody as a prize but were under its protection. Presently Tilly put his finger in the pie too and reproached the Council for not being able to protect its Jews from such insults by the Emperor's enemies. He threatened reprisals if Mannsfeld were paid a single heller. He was not the only one who wanted to seize the 10,000 thalers; the Emperor's brother Leopold, who commanded the

troops in Alsace, asked that the sum demanded by Count Mannsfeld be delivered. The Emperor, who had received several reports of this rather complicated situation, released the Jews from every claim for payment, and warned the Council to take energetic measures against such demands in the future. To be sure, the Emperor did not mean that the Council should interfere with his own demands on the Frankfort community. On the contrary, in spite of all protests from the city authorities, he still regarded the Jews as serfs of the chamber bound to perform certain services for him. From the year 1623 until the year 1630 his plenipotentiaries came to them almost every year with a new claim upon them under an old or a new name, be it the golden Opferpfennig, the Crown tax or whatever else. Usually it was possible by bargaining to reduce the sum considerably. The Council too put the screws energetically on both Christians and Jews, who so far as regular taxes were concerned were then about on a par with each other. But, in addition, the Jewish community had to pay extraordinary war levies. On account of war expenses, indeed, the city was hard put to it during those years. Not only did it have to maintain a large band of mercenaries and constantly repair and improve the fortifications, but the city and its surroundings were forever plagued by troops marching through and by requisitions of food, horses, and artillery, apart from the reprisals demanded in the form of cash. In the year 1629 General Colalto of the Imperial forces kept up a siege of the city till it consented to pay 21,000 gold florins and provisions.

But, as the city exchequer was to be spared as far as possible, it had been considered quite in order after the year 1620 to shift most of the expenditures for the increase of the armed forces to the monasteries and religious establishments and to the Jews. In addition considerable sums of money had to be paid for fortification and for billeting.

At the beginning of the thirties of the century, the military situation of Frankfort was totally changed. Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, had landed in Germany and had won the great victory of Breitenfeld, September 7, 1631. On November 27, he marched into Frankfort at the head of his army. Although the city was strongly Protestant, it was not particularly glad to welcome the celebrated champion of Protestantism within its walls. The Swedish occupation was just as oppressive as the demands of the Imperial generals had been. The expenditures of the city for the maintenance of the mercenaries, for the care of the Swedish troops, and for keeping the fortifications in good condition rose continually. The whole population had to work on the battlements, and to the Jews was assigned the building of one bastion. The Council offered to have the work done by soldiers at the expense of the Jewish community, but the trustees of the community refused. Obviously, since demands had grown from year to year, they did not think it desirable to hand over money for something that could be accomplished by their own work. The Swedes too had found their way to the Jews. In the very first year, they insisted on having two to three thousand thalers for the purchase of

wagons and six horses. A year later, the screws were tightened and much greater demands were made. One of the commanders asked that within twenty-four hours 100,000 thalers should be paid or the community be prepared to be denied protection and have it withdrawn within a fortnight. The Council was able to ward off from the Jews this incredible demand by demonstrating that such a thing was contrary to the terms of capitulation agreed upon with Gustavus Adolphus.

The battle of Nördlingen, 1635, broke the luck of the Swedes in war. After severe fighting they were driven out of Frankfort. That was the most miserable period of the whole war for both the Christians and the Jews of Frankfort. Pestilence, which had afflicted the city in 1626–27, visited within its walls again. Mortality ran high. Even among the Jews, cut off from the others and leading more temperate lives, and therefore suffering less, we find frightfully high mortality figures. The number of inhabitants in the ghetto had reached its highest during the war in 1624, when it was about 2,200, but it had steadily declined, and in 1636 had sunk to about 1,575. The reduction was not due entirely to death. There were economic reasons too. But it is proof of the virulence of the epidemic that in 1635 there died two hundred and twenty-two persons, including one hundred and sixty children, and in 1636, one hundred and seventy-five persons. Desire to marry vanished altogether. In the years 1631 and 1632 no marriages at all were contracted; in 1633 and in 1635, nine, whereas in

1620, for example, there had been twenty-eight weddings in the Jewish quarter.

With the opening of the thirties, the wealth of the Jewish community also declined more and more. How should it have been otherwise when the flower of Frankfort, of all Germany, in fact, lay withered? The chief losses were bound up with the trade of money-lending. The more well-being in general declined on account of the endless warfare and the more the surroundings of Frankfort were ravaged by enemies and blooming districts converted to wastes, the less secure did debts become. Many debtors had fallen victim to the war or the epidemics; others had become so impoverished that they could not meet their obligations. Any capital therefore that had been saved sought other profitable outlets and in so doing encountered the more or less successful opposition of the Christian artisans and traders, to which we have repeatedly had occasion to call attention. In the charges that were endlessly repeated, it was put forward that the Jews had in recent years presumed to trade in all sorts of wares, even in bacon, "which they had formerly held to be an abomination." They ran after soldiers, officers, and chiefs secretly and openly, outside the Jewish quarter, in the city, and in the inns or wherever else possible. They had induced some masters of the tailoring trade, it was said, to help them, and when the troops marched through (on which occasions the Jewish quarter had to remain locked) they had stocked the houses and shops of their accomplices full of garments, and had "let them go shares." It is true that selling new, ready-made

clothing had been permitted to the Jews, but it is not to be doubted that again and again they forced themselves into branches of trade forbidden them by statute, for necessity knows no law. The longer the war lasted, the more every sort of regular trade was ruined except that in horses. The community grew poorer and poorer. In a petition dated 1638 the condition of the Jewish quarter is described in the following terms:—"Many dwellings have long been abandoned by their tenants on account of their excessive poverty, and they are not repaired, so that they tumble down bit by bit; many have been publicly cried and offered for sale in our synagogues by order of the Council on account of the non-payment and neglect of house rents and other duties that are owing, so that we regard our ruined huts more as houses of mourning than as dwellings." Possibly the description is slightly overdrawn, for it was intended to dissuade the Council from quartering the soldiers in the ghetto, which had hitherto been spared this burden; but it must have come pretty close to the truth. The extent to which the material condition of the Jews had deteriorated in the course of the war is confirmed much more definitely by the statistics of taxes than by any other evidence. We mentioned above that, beside the regular taxes and the incidental fleecing practised by the various generals, the Council imposed extraordinary war levies. The community had to pay an average of five hundred rix-dollars weekly, a sum reduced later, to be sure, to three hundred. From 1634 to 1650 the community paid a total of 109,000 florins, thus contributing their

portion in generous measure to the war expenses of the city. These were enormous, bearing in mind that they are not to be compared with those of the present day. In 1634 the city paid 164,514 florins for soldiers' pay, and 13,945 florins for work on the fortifications. When we compare the lists of the regular taxes for individual years, it is easy to see the steady diminution of the revenue from 1627 on. From 1634 on the city auditors frequently complain to the Council that despite repeated warnings many Jews were behind in payment of taxes. Even the threat of recalling the Stättigkeit could for the most part not force payment, and imagine what it meant in those disorderly times for the Jews to leave the protecting walls of the city and lead an unsettled life of wandering, a welcome prey to marauding soldiers and highwaymen. This was proof that the cause of the refusal to pay was not lack of good will but sheer inability. The delinquents had to leave the city without delay; but even the others, though they finally paid, often let their taxes fall in arrears. To meet its obligations, the Jewish community borrowed money of Christians, a debt that was not paid till some years after the end of the war. Many a German-Jewish family migrated to Poland in those days.

The years from 1635 to 1648 saw the tide of battle flow elsewhere. Though far removed from the actual scene of war, the region of Frankfort continued to suffer from the impoverishment and misery which laid a paralyzing hand on all the provinces of Germany. Moreover the various generals did not cease to make reprisals and demands for money. Emperor

Ferdinand III, successor to Ferdinand II, particularly, made outrageous claims under the most varied names and through the most varied representatives. Long drawn out negotiations and clever brokers who were not sparing of bribes always managed to save the impoverished people from the Imperial demands.

At last, after years of parleying in Münster and Osnabrück peace was concluded. It was a sad peace, by which Germany lost the greater part of Alsace to France and Pomerania to Sweden. Besides, she had to pay various powers, especially Sweden, a goodly sum of money as indemnity, to which the various estates of the realm had to contribute. It was no more than fair that the Jewish subjects as well as the Christians had to pay a share. In 1649 the Jews of Frankfort paid 6,000 florins "for the satisfaction of the Swedes." Now, after the conclusion of peace, when they were having such a struggle for their livelihood, they did not consider it at all in order for the Emperor to argue that as they had suffered much less than the Christians during the war he wished to extort from them the larger sum of thirty to forty thousand thalers. Even if "the well-known dexterity" of the Jewish brokers succeeded in having the matter officially dropped, it is certain that secretly no slight sum was paid to be quit of all claims.

The peace that had been so long and so ardently yearned for found a Germany reduced to complete misery. A long time was needed for the country to rise again to prosperity. Men and money were lacking. There were no precious metals in the country, for the alien generals had stolen too much and carried

it off to their own lands. In many parts of Germany they reverted practically to the economic stage of barter. Holland, Sweden, and Poland occupied the mouths of the great rivers and erected customs barriers, so that the path of German wholesale trade to the world routes on the seas was blocked. Only a few marts in the interior, like Nuremberg, Leipsic, and also Frankfort, had saved a fraction of their former importance for the evil times upon which they had fallen.

The years after the war were sad for the Jewish community of Frankfort as well as for all German Jews. With numbers and wealth diminished, public and private morals degraded—for never did informers and scandalmongers flourish as then—they lived on, surrounded by an unfriendly world, one indeed that was hostile and hated them. For a short time they were snatched from their debased and pitiable state and raised to the heights and the light of day. All the promises of the Bible seemed about to be fulfilled. The future glittered before them as depicted by the prophets. The millennium seemed at hand. The report came to the Jews of Europe that in Smyrna a man had arisen by the name of Sabbatai Zevi who fulfilled the Messianic prophecies and would lead the Jews languishing in exile back to the Promised Land. In Jerusalem, in Aleppo, and in Smyrna, they paid homage to the new King, and many communities in the prosaic Occident recognized in him a Messenger of God. Even many Christians wavered in their faith. Full of astonishment they told one another of the tremendous excitement that

had taken possession of the Jewish communities of Avignon, London, Vienna, and other places. The more thoughtful, the doubters, were little heeded. In Frankfort, too, Sabbatai Zevi had a numerous following, even among the officers of the congregation. Everywhere in the city the Christians were struck with the confident tone, the proud bearing of the erstwhile humble, slinking creatures. Without shyness, they now informed the Christians that they had suffered enough, a new page would be turned, and the Christians began to talk of the miracles performed by the new Messiah, proclaimed through the city by a mountebank and itinerant prophet, Sabbatai Raphael.

But the glory of the alleged champion of God did not endure. The Turkish government, apprised of his doings, scented behind them highly treasonable designs. He was arrested and offered the choice of being executed as an agitator, after dreadful torture, or of forswearing his faith. He chose the latter, and going over to Islam entered the Sultan's service as a doorkeeper under the name of Mehemed Effendi. Thus his glory crumbled. Laughter, scorn, and mockery now pursued the poor, disillusioned Jews who had let an impostor lead them by the nose. Even after the death of the mean-spirited leader, however, faithful disciples survived, who continued to believe in Sabbatai Zevi's divine mission. Sabbatianism still lurked in Frankfort in the early part of the eighteenth century till the rabbi, together with several of the respected members of the congregation, succeeded in "closing the gates of Frankfort" to this illusory doctrine.

So the Jews, after their brief carouse, had to resume the everyday routine of their sober existence of ceaseless preoccupation with material gain, for they needed an income not only to support themselves, but because it was their best, their only weapon in their struggle with a world arrayed against them.

The second half of the seventeenth century brought no profound changes to the Frankfort Jews. And yet, at bottom, what years of struggle they had to live through! They had always to be in an attitude of defense toward various powers—now the Emperor, now the city government, and behind them the guilds and the Christian tradesmen. It was always necessary to be on guard, to find noble patrons and skilful agents, and above all to make sacrifices of money to maintain their rights and their claims.

The treatment accorded them by Leopold I, who succeeded Ferdinand III, was not really bad. He was not a Jew-hater despite the fact that even on the throne he remained a member of the Jesuit order. On the whole, the Jews of Frankfort found a protector in him, though their right to travel, restricted as it was, was further threatened. Naturally they had to pay a high price for this protection. Leopold, for one thing, in the course of his long reign, required great sums of them on all sorts of pretexts and for all sorts of purposes. These sums were usually reduced considerably as the result of careful negotiations. As soon as Leopold began to reign, it became clear that when the German Jews asked for the confirmation of their

privileges it would be granted only for a considerable offering of money. The heads of the Frankfort community were in favor of common action by the Jews of Germany in this important matter. For the sake of economy, they proposed that their own envoys should champion the general Jewish cause in Vienna. It is indicative of the petty spirit of jealousy and the lack of union in the Jewry of that day that they were unwilling to give the necessary credentials to the Frankfort envoys. And yet there was something more vital at stake than the late payment of taxes in arrears and the mere confirmation of privileges that had been granted at an earlier time. The tale of ritual murder again haunted men's minds. The Jews of Metz, for example, had been accused of the murder of a boy found in the woods. Similar blood accusations were made in Vienna and Berlin. It was most urgent that intervention against the movement should come from the highest authority. And still no common action!

Left in the lurch by the German Jews generally, the Frankfort community decided to act alone, and sent two of its most worthy men to Vienna. The negotiations led to the desired result. The Imperial Privy Councillors of finance were satisfied with a payment of 6,000 thalers. We have to deny ourselves the pleasure of giving the details of the Imperial document, interesting as it would be for the history of civilization. Of special value in those days was the way the blood accusation was disposed of. The explicit statement was made that only recently the Jewry of Frankfort had been accused of shedding

blood and that it was thereby greatly dismayed. The Emperor therefore forbade anyone henceforth to arrest a Frankfort Jew on such charges, much less torture and execute one without the evidence of trustworthy witnesses. Such cases should rather be brought to the Imperial Court and await trial there. All decrees running counter to this were declared void. A lively interest was taken in the Frankfort Jews in Vienna, more lively than was agreeable to the Council. Word came to the ears of the latter that the Imperial treasury had in mind the repurchase of the Jews, a possibility left open, as is well known, by the documentary pledge of Charles IV, so often mentioned. As a matter of course the city resisted this with all its might. Envoys were sent to Vienna and were unsparing of attentions and bribes. For example, the daughter of the supreme Chancellor of the Court Hofman happened to be marrying at that time, and they honored her with a silver dish, which created in this worthy's mind a very favorable prejudice for the city on the Main. The Jews themselves were not asked to whom they preferred to be subject. If they had been asked they would hardly have been able to choose which was the lesser of the two evils. If the Emperor sent a commission to Frankfort to secure a large contribution for his wars with Turkey, they sought protection from the Council, and turned for assistance also to the richest and most powerful Jew of the day, the Imperial High Factor of the Court, Samson Wertheimer in Vienna, who was connected by marriage with Jewish families in Frankfort. Again, when their own city treated the Jews badly,

the Emperor was regarded as a lord protector. In these decades of economic stagnation and general desolation elbow room in lucrative occupations for the people of the Imperial cities was far more restricted than before. Christian tradesmen and artisans had to struggle for a living, and the Jews had to watch out eagerly for every way of making profit. The competition of the two groups bore poisonous blossoms. The petty and vexatious trickery with which the Council, itself urged by the burghers and artisans, tormented the Jews led many to think freedom from the control of the city desirable and the Emperor's yoke the easier to bear. The envoys of the city often wrote home that for all the measures they took at the Imperial court counter-measures were taken to hinder their progress, which they thought originated in the Jewish quarter. Their suspicions were not unfounded.

After much discussion back and forth the open-handedness and adroitness of the Frankfort envoys succeeded in bringing to a favorable close their efforts for the recall of the documentary pledge. The joy of the Council was, however, of only short duration.

The Jews of Frankfort had received—we do not know from what source—a copy of the document, and were not a little disturbed by several sentences and turns of expression in it. In the first place they were aroused because they were described as bondsmen and serfs of the city. Even though for centuries they had been accustomed to the status of oppressed subjects, not citizens, still legally they were far removed from serfdom. They had the right

to move about freely from place to place. The city could to be sure refuse to harbor new Jews, but nobody could forbid them to remove from Frankfort if they wished. They were not bound to the soil. Without delay the trustees of the Frankfort community in Vienna, moved by their fears, decided to present a petition and took as their counsel the Imperial Court Agent Von Bernardi. He was not to appear as plaintiff against the Council, to which the community "recognized itself as owing most obedient respect," but was to agitate for the elimination of those expressions in the declaration capable of an interpretation disadvantageous to the Jews. The matter was to be so contrived that the Emperor should issue as if on his own initiative a manifesto in regard to the objectionable expressions.

We do not know what method Bernardi followed or how far he was supported by the rich Jew Abraham Drach of Frankfort and by Samson Wertheimer mentioned above, but he accomplished his purpose. October 28, 1685, the Emperor issued a counter-declaration, in which he said that the previous document was not to be so interpreted as to appear to diminish what had been granted the Jews by charters of an earlier date. Though it described them as "bondsmen and body-serfs" of the city of Frankfort, he saw in the documents that previously they had always been allowed to move about in the city without let or hindrance and to marry at their own pleasure, and had always had the right to move away upon the payment of the tithe. These rights and others that they had might not be tampered with.

No slight dissatisfaction prevailed in the Council over the independent activity of the Jews who had been so bold as to take important steps at the Imperial Court behind the back of the legally constituted authority. Fearing reprisals, the Jews wrote an apology sorrowful and humble in tone, but the mood of the Council was not altered in their favor. It was resolved to keep a sharper eye on them and see that they lived in exact accordance with the terms of the Stättigkeit, and so forth. To begin with, they were asked to give up the counter-declaration that had been "surreptitiously gained" as well as all the franchises they had in the communal archives. They were further asked to sign an undertaking never to appeal to the counter-declaration but to submit in all points to the declaration of July, 1685. If, indeed, it spoke of serfdom, the Council had meant by that to express its rights of sovereignty and property, and was far from the thought of trying to introduce true serfdom. The trustees of the Jewish community, while protesting their loyalty, had the courage to deny the requests of the Council, because they "could not answer to posterity for such action." Nor did they yield to stringent measures, the imposition of an entirely unjustifiable tax of 3,000 thalers, fines for several prominent members of the community, and imprisonment for others; but they appealed against the illegal procedure of the Council to the Imperial Court of Appeals in Speyer. The Court demanded a report from the Council within four weeks, and forbade it to undertake anything against the Jews within that period. The Council had to

obey, but it could not suppress its astonishment at the "spite" and "impiousness" of the Jews, who had without cause presumed to summon their superiors before the Supreme Court.

Months and months passed, and no decision came from the Court of Appeals in Speyer or from Vienna. The city counted that in its favor, and decided to collect the extra tax it had asked by seizure in the most striking manner possible. First the highest Jewish officials were for several days kept prisoners in the pesthouse. Then the city carts were driven into the Jewish quarter and the tax collectors went into the houses of the richest Jews. They loaded on the carts as pledges whatever they could lay hands on in the way of gold, silver, and brass vessels and other valuable objects until they had three times the amount of the assessment of each individual. The articles collected in this way were forthwith sold at auction. But the seizures were not continued the next day. The Council was, not without cause, troubled lest the seizure "should resound far and wide in the world." And the Jews hinted that "despite the deplorable condition of their finances," the 3,000 thalers asked could perhaps be raised. In the meanwhile, however, they again appealed to Vienna, and the city also lost no time in presenting its point of view there. A far-reaching game of intrigue and a campaign of bribery in grand style were renewed, and in their course offered the two parties various surprises of both pleasant and unpleasant nature. At last, in February, 1690, the trial came off before the Imperial Aulic Council in Vienna and went against the Frankfort

Council on every count. "The loose knavish rabble," as the Council called the Jews, had won. In future payments of taxes, they were to be credited with the fines they had paid and the property that had been seized. There was to be no further talk of serfdom.

Naturally the Council still had enough power in its hands to put some bitterness into the Jews' cup of joy over their victory. The easiest ways of doing that, such as stricter control of all business transactions, have become familiar to the reader. The publication in print of the Stättigkeit was designed to familiarize the citizens with its many articles and enable them to coöperate with the Council. Moneylending was made troublesome by the provision that whenever the Jews made loans of more than three florins they were to be entered in a special book by a Christian clerk. Their business books and foreign correspondence were thereafter to be kept in the German language and with German letters of the alphabet, and they were to be allowed to receive only such business letters addressed to them as were in German. In judging this rule we must remember that, as very few Jews of the time could express themselves correctly in German either in oral or written speech, it caused them serious annoyance. The trustees of the community assured the Council that hardly one in ten Jews could read or write German, though most were able to scribble their names in German, and that therefore they would be forced to employ a special clerk, to which they were able to adduce eighteen objections.

The Council sought the advice of the syndics, and their wisdom found a way out. They conceded to the Jews the right to conduct their correspondence in Hebrew as before, but only when writing to Poland and such other countries as were independent of France, and they forbade all correspondence with the latter and her allies. It must be remembered that we are dealing with the period of Louis XIV's war of aggression against Germany. Further, all the correspondence of the Jews, whether written in German or in Hebrew, was to be submitted to censorship. It cannot be disputed that the syndics deserve credit for pointing out the lack of knowledge of the German language among the Jews and requiring the Council to make better provision for the German instruction of Jewish children. Their intention was not altruistic, but had their suggestion been carried out by the Council, the effects on the Jews might have been beneficent. The Council left the matter to the Jews themselves, and in consequence nothing whatever happened.

The appeal of the Council to the burghers for coöperation in adhering strictly to the terms of the Stättigkeit did not die a quiet death. A whole phalanx of dealers in all sorts of wares arose against the Jews. Attention was again called to the small shops kept by the Jews in the city outside of their quarter. They were ordered to clear out of them within a fortnight. This measure cut deep into industrial conditions and was not readily accepted by the Jews. They entered suit in the Imperial Aulic Council, which dragged on for a matter of a hundred

years and had reached no decision when the German Empire broke to pieces under Napoleon's fist. Accordingly, the Jews retained possession of their shops and stores. In other respects too they were able to defend themselves vigorously, and despite all attacks things remained fundamentally the same as before. An amusing note was struck in this dispute which shows what exaggerated measures were attempted. The Frankfort book-trade raised a complaint against Jewish competition. There were in all only two Jewish book-dealers, who had rented a room in the Buchgasse. Upon these two the Christian booksellers put the responsibility for the decline of the Frankfort book-trade and the ruin of the book-fair, which were of course to be attributed to quite other causes.

There were other battles for the Jews of that period to fight than the continuance of their book-trade. They had to wage war against individual books of the nature of pamphlets about them. Especially infamous was Eisenmenger's "Judaism Unmasked." Its accusations threw into the shade anything ever before uttered against the Jews. In Pfefferkorn's time the Council had been inclined to protect the Jews, but it was now hostile to them. They had therefore to seek the Emperor's protection which was not denied them. The publication was forbidden.

CHAPTER VIII

EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY THE GREAT CONFLAGRATIONS

In the year 1705 Joseph I was crowned successor to Leopold in Frankfort. Like the coronation of Mathias, this occasion proved a favorable moment for the outbreak of revolutionary disorders, similar in cause and purpose to the Fettmilch Insurrection. The leaders, an innkeeper named Fritsch and a dyer in blue named Böhler, shared Vincent Fettmilch's thoroughgoing Jew-hatred, and in this were in agreement with the masses. Criticism of mismanagement by the city authorities in various departments may have been entirely justified, but not the charge that they sided with the Jews as against the Christian population, for the Council, as we have learned, had for a long time been litigating against the Jews. The dissatisfied party maintained that the whole crew of Councillors was financially in complete dependence on the Jews, since the majority of the members lent them money at a high rate of interest and shared in their business ventures. That was why, it was alleged, no one received justice in a suit against a Jew. That was why, too, the Jews could take such liberties in the business and the social world, both in public and in private, and why they could go about the city so freely, as if the Stättigkeit of the year 1616 had been abrogated.

To think that laws passed a hundred years earlier were still held valid, when fundamental economic

changes had taken place and the first dawn of the new ideals of humanity was to be seen on the horizon! Faith in the innate rights of man had not yet found adherents in the circles of the Frankfort burghers, nor did the Jews in their cramped sphere use these ideas as weapons. It was thought that as things then were, so would they always be. All they attempted was to ward off new restrictions and new regulations of an exceptional character.

The views of the burghers' committee are unambiguously expressed in a petition by Fritsch and Böhler, in which they tried to show how the Jews, favored through the negligence of the Council, transgressed the Stättigkeit. What were the things that gave offense? That the Jews and Jewesses of Frankfort no longer wore yellow circles on their garments, which had ceased to be the practice in most of Germany; that they ventured altogether to dress so that they were barely to be distinguished from Christians; that they shamelessly flaunted themselves beyond the gates of their quarter on Sundays and holidays; that they played in regiments on the Wollgraben that bordered the ghetto on the south; that, indeed, they even appeared, to the great annoyance of the Christians, at the wells in the fields and in the gardens outside of the city; that, furthermore, they did not heed the terms of their Stättigkeit in regard to their use of the streets of the city, but, instead of walking alone or by twos, they did so "in whole companies." These were some of the charges made. What lurked in the background, of course, was, as on previous occasions, jealousy of

competition in business. The conduct of the Jew as merchant was subjected to attack even more than his social behavior. In memorials of the most varied sort appear the old familiar complaints about Jewish shrewdness in trade, on which was blamed the citizens' inability any longer to make a good living. Imagination concocted new charges in addition to the others. Such dissensions continued to the end of 1710. At the beginning of the new year occurred an event that distracted attention and gave it other occupation.

On Wednesday, January 14, a fire broke out in the home of the Chief Rabbi, Naphtali Cohen. The scholar sat absorbed among his sacred books, and probably hardly noticed that a spark fell upon the yellowed pages of one. When he became aware of the misfortune, he was unable to take any measure of protection. Presence of mind forsook him, and he was seen standing motionless for a long time, murmuring prayers, his face turned toward the synagogue diagonally across the street from his home. The fire spread rapidly. The narrowness of the street, the numerous projections on the houses, the high wind, the absence of water, and, last but not least, the complete lack of presence of mind among the Jews, all helped the flames.

As soon as news of the fire was spread among the citizens by the signal bell and by the redness of the night sky, fire brigades hurried to give assistance, but the Jews feared that their houses would be sacked and locked the gates, even threatening to kill those who tried to open them by force. At last the gates

yielded to the carpenters' axes. After the men had pushed their way in they recognized their utter helplessness in face of the devouring element. All they could do was help the Jews carry their possessions to places of safety. In many cases, the helpers forgot to return the articles they saved to their rightful owners. The initial fear of the Jews was not unjustified.

The fire raged all night with undiminished violence despite the fact that fire-engines rushed to the spot from all the neighboring villages. It had been unnecessary to send for them, for the skies for twelve miles around had been lighted by the glow. Not till early in the morning of January 15 did the Council send a deputation to the burning quarter instructed to take all conceivable measures to control the blaze and assist the Jews, and make provision in the city for those rendered homeless. The poorest were sheltered in the pesthouse, and were given wood and other necessaries. At the end of twenty-two to twenty-four hours the fire was under control. Council and citizens breathed more freely. They had escaped a terrible danger, for on the east side of the ghetto rose the so-called Mönchsturm filled with gunpowder and all sorts of munitions. It would have been easy for a spark to leap across to it and cause an explosion.

On the evening of January 15, the Jewish quarter was a mass of smoking ruins. All the houses had burnt down except the beams of one back building left standing. The cellar vaults looked like open trenches. Many of the Jews had placed the possessions they had rescued in their cellars, hoping thus to

conceal as well as save them, and had succeeded in this. Others had thrown their goods down the wells. Most had snatched what they could and had taken refuge in the cemetery where varicolored household gear was piled up among the quiet homes of the dead. The calamity was great, but it was fortunate that only four persons lost their lives in the fire.

The catastrophe made a tremendous impression on contemporaries. "Such a *makkah* (blow) had not occurred within the memory of man. The whole *Olam* (world) bewails, mourns and laments it . . ." says one of the many songs of mourning written in more or less apt rhymes to commemorate that night of terror. Not only were coins and medals struck and pictures painted, but for years the event served theologians of all confessions, from the Archbishop of Mayence down to the unfortunate Rabbi Naphtali Cohen, as the text for edifying meditations. The Christian preachers were unanimous in seeing in the conflagration the finger of God. Was it not miraculous that the powder tower was spared and that the wind suddenly veered and turned the flames back to the Jewish quarter just as danger threatened the Christian houses close by? The Jews themselves agreed with this view. Rabbi Naphtali explained to the Council: "We Jews recognize in the fire a punishment that must be endured." The same thought recurs in songs and prayers of penitence. Contemporaries were struck with the quiet, submissive attitude of the Jews under this blow of fate. No murmur escaped their lips. On the contrary, they tried, by improving their conduct and by kindness to

the poor, to regain God's favor, which, they thought, they had trifled away. This mood of contrition was welcomed by the zealots among them. They ruled that the gaieties and nonsense in which the people had indulged on Hanukkah and Purim should for a number of years be forbidden; no clowns were thereafter to rejoice the young of the Judengasse and transport them for a few hours at least beyond their joyless existence by uncouth jokes and gay masquerade. For a period of fourteen years all games except chess were forbidden. A little later laws were made against luxury in dress, display at entertainments and so forth, just as from time to time similar decrees were issued in the Christian world.

The innocent cause of the fire, Rabbi Naphtali Cohen, in the meanwhile lay in prison. Despite the fact that he barely escaped with his life and mourned the destruction of his precious library and all his other possessions, despite the fact that numerous hearings revealed his complete innocence, he was to be released only after the payment of 4000 thalers bail. Though the bail was reduced to 2000 florins, no one was willing to go security for him. Even the wealthy Samson Wertheimer of Vienna, who had so often helped the community in times of distress, refused. The community, impoverished as it was, certainly did not wish to go bail for him. Few had harsh words for him, but what had become of the feeling of reverence with which in the year 1704, as one of the most famous Talmud scholars of the time, after a life of adventures, he had been solemnly welcomed at the gates as rabbi of Frankfort? Naphtali

pleaded with the Council for permission to attend the fair under the escort of soldiers, so that he might beg the Jews from other places to furnish him bail. He was denied. Finally, in May, several alien Jews together with some from Frankfort took pity on him, paying 1550 florins and giving two clocks as the Council had requested. He was released from prison, and as is readily to be understood he left Frankfort at once to face an uncertain future.

The street that had recently been so narrow had become a broad desolate place. In the smoking ruins lay buried the wealth of the community. All the wares that had been stored with the Jews, cloth, woolens, silk, and linens, had been reduced to "powder." Little lumps of melted metal were all that was left of precious silver, pewter, and copper vessels. It was impossible to replace the rare books, manuscripts, and valuable scrolls of the Law lost in the fire. Works of art must have been destroyed, Gobelins, paintings, etc., part of which had belonged to the wealthy Jews—it is known that many costly furnishings were tucked away in those narrow houses—and part of which had been left with them as pledges.

The immediate task of the Council was to house the unfortunates as speedily as possible. Any Jew unable to show his Stättigkeit had to leave the city without hope of grace or mercy. The rest had to seek shelter with the burghers. The well-to-do were successful. The poorer folk that could not afford the rentals demanded and did not find place in the poorhouse, scattered and found easier terms of admission with the petty princes of the neighborhood. When

the Council took its first steps on behalf of the unfortunate Jews, the citizens' committee, which was engaged in a constitutional dispute with the Council and which was particularly hostile toward the Jews, remained quiet. It did not protest when the Council made public announcement of its order for the restitution to the Jews of the property stolen from them, and when it ordered the inhabitants of the villages under the rule of Frankfort to clear the rubbish out of the Jews' quarter, for which the latter were to furnish the workmen with bread and beer. But when the question of rebuilding the ghetto was considered, that was thought to be the time for interference. In a session of the Council on February 17, 1711, a speaker went so far as to assert that God Himself had kindled the fire in the houses of the unbelievers and it meant completing God's work not to rebuild the ghetto.

The Jews indeed were the serfs of the city. It might therefore remove them without being called to account. But if the Council wished to keep them anyway, then the Judengasse should be rebuilt not in the old location but outside the city, and the terms of admission be regulated by a new Stättigkeit, which should assure the Christian population an entirely different type of economic protection. Sinister as the spirit of this speech was, it yet contained several suggestions of very encouraging nature. For example, it was urged that the houses should not be built so high, that they should be provided with fire walls, and a street should be laid out broad enough to allow two or three carriages to pass comfortably.

The "New" Synagogue (Börnestrasse)

Voices insisting on persecution now rose among the burghers too. They asked that the Jews should leave their quarters in the houses of Christian citizens and remove to the villages in the surrounding country. Threats were made that if another conflagration should break out in the city, all the Jews would be thrown into the fire, for just then several big fires had visited the city at short intervals, for which these burghers held the Jews responsible. But the zeal of the persecutors was greatly dampened by the public proclamation of an Imperial decree, which made the Council responsible for the safety of the Jews living in the city and especially for the rebuilding of the ghetto. Relying on Imperial protection, the Jews now bore themselves more confidently. When they asked the Council for permission to rebuild on the old site, they ventured to express the hope that in the course of the work "some sort of comfort and financial aid would be bestowed upon" them. The Council deferred its final decision, for it did not know its own mind as to how the ghetto should be reconstructed. For the present it allowed the synagogue to be rebuilt. The cornerstone was laid on March 25. "It was a joy and pastime," remarked the contemporary writer Schudt, "to see how every man, young and old, wanted to work at it with great earnestness and zeal, and paid the mason journeymen generously just to be allowed to help." For every week ahead of the specified time that the building was completed, a special premium was promised the architect. So the work went on apace, and at the end of September, 1711, when the high holidays approached, it was just

possible to conduct services in it. The synagogue was built in the exact proportions of the old one, but whereas the earlier one "had looked like a smoke-hole or chimney," the new one was richly adorned with marble, brass, and other decorative materials.

For various reasons, the reconstruction of the rest of the ghetto proceeded slowly. There was unending dispute about the new building regulations. The Council, forever goaded and urged by the burghers' committee, perhaps moved also by considerations of safety, wished the new street to be wider, the houses to be lower and without projections, and to be separated one from another by fire walls, and no cellar vault was to be below another. Even though the Jews may have realized that a more spacious way of building would lessen the danger of conflagration—no one took thought of sanitation—they offered the utmost opposition to the modifications, because in view of the fact that a greater area was not to be placed at their disposal, many of their number would have to emigrate. Finally, they were allowed as building space the so-called long walk, which ran between the back buildings and the former city wall, and the wall, having suffered great damage in the fire, was to be pulled down. The Jews petitioned for permission to buy a bleaching field that bordered on their street, but lively objection arose within the burghers' boards. Samson Wertheimer of Vienna, who had so often been helpful, finally succeeded in acquiring the lot of ground and put it at the disposal of the Jews. Still they did not get permission to occupy it. Very much later on they were granted the

right to erect their bake-ovens on it. After the building regulations were determined, the work was delayed for lack of funds. For the first time since the Frankfort community began its existence, it had to go to other Jewish communities of Germany for help, a sign of their impoverishment. Still everyone was in a hurry to proceed with the rebuilding, for the city demanded the payment of taxes even on the unimproved lots of ground.

In those years the Jews had other battles to fight. The burghers' committee, still at loggerheads with the Council about the constitution, sent one complaint after the other both to the Council and to Vienna about the business methods of the Jews, their alleged extravagance in dress, and what not. They had their own envoys there to represent the wishes of the citizens. They were always in favor of banishing the Jews, or of settling them in the villages of Frankfort, or, at least, of limiting their number to a very few families. The court in Vienna did not heed their wishes. Charles VI, successor of Joseph I, was, to be sure, anything but friendly to the Jews, but he protected them to this extent at least, that he indicated by decree that he did not regard the wishes of the citizens' committee as justified, and he ordered the prompt rebuilding of the ghetto.

Construction now proceeded despite all possible annoyances, though slowly. In the middle of the year 1716 most of the houses were under cover, though as late as 1719 some sites were still filled with the rubbish left by the fire. Yet, strange to say, the Jews who were living in the city proper showed abso-

lutely no desire to move back into the ghetto. They had not fared ill in the midst of the busy life of the city. They had gone about freely among the other citizens on Sundays and holidays. Despite the hostile attitude of the burghers' committee, no excesses had been committed, except that there had once been a row between some Jews and some Christian merchants' clerks. Thrown together by circumstances, they began to grow used to the situation. Should they now return to their previous restraint, be penned between high walls? To escape such conditions even Jews whose houses had been completed went on paying rent. However, nothing would do but that they must go back to the ghetto.

Hardly were they settled in the rebuilt quarter when there was another conflagration. January 28, 1721, a fire broke out in the "back Vogelsang" in the western row of houses, in the dwelling of the director Moses Elkan. It quickly developed into a fire of devastating force. By the morning of January 29, the northern portion of the ghetto, in which, for the most part, lived the well-to-do, had been burnt down. Over one hundred houses had been converted into charred ruins. The massive synagogue located in this part of the street was the one structure that had resisted the flames. Only its roof was burnt.

In the spirit of their fathers, the Jews again regarded the conflagration as a divine visitation in punishment for their sins. The Chief Rabbi considered it his duty to gather the congregation in the synagogue immediately after the misfortune, hold up to them their evil ways, and warn them to repent

Interior of the "New" Synagogue

that they might avoid further divine wrath. The Christians, however, did not derive any satisfaction of an edifying nature from this fire, even though it had been confined to the precincts of the ghetto. The cause of this change of heart was "the great Christian fire," which had raged two years before and had reduced the houses in street after street to ashes, but had spared the Judengasse. It was clear that God's wrath was visited upon the entire city. The Jews had, in fact, suffered great business losses on account of the fire in the Christian section of the city, for they had stored all sorts of precious wares in dwellings of citizens that had burned down. The property spared by the flames in 1721 was dragged away or destroyed by "rescuers" and "helpers." When the fire broke out crowds at once poured into the ghetto ostensibly to help. "But," as the Jews complained to the Council, "they stole the goods left in the houses that were saved, as well as stoves, windows, and roofs, and even food, wine, and their precious meal were not spared."

Unlike the Christian capitalists of the city, probably on account of their lack of ready money, the Jews were fortunately not infected by the fever for reckless speculation characteristic of the times, the period of Law's English finance schemes. When therefore, after Law's collapse, French, Dutch, and English securities fell in value, the Jews suffered no direct losses. Indirectly, however, the crisis caused them serious damage. Depression prevailed in the community. Confidence in the future had been lost. It was feared that there could be no recovery from

such blows of fate in a hundred years, perhaps never. This fear was, of course, exaggerated; yet it did take two generations for them to work up out of their poverty-stricken condition. Till well past the middle of the eighteenth century the greater part of Frankfort Jewry were destitute, or had to struggle hard for their daily bread. In 1750 practically one-fourth of the community could not defray their taxes or had to live on charity. It was, therefore, not from lack of good will that they were continually impelled to resist new tax burdens. The Council and the Emperor were at first inclined to grant them all possible consideration, but need of funds triumphed over insight. Unexpectedly Charles VI demanded the payment of the crown tax and the "golden Opferpfenning." One can imagine to what shifts the Jewish representatives in Vienna were put to evade compliance. The Council granted exemption from taxes till 1727, but even then the Jews were unable to make full payments. In 1730 arrears amounted to 30,000 florins. Rebuilding of the houses proceeded slowly. In 1727 forty-five families were still lodging with Christians and paying rent, and they stoutly objected to returning to the ghetto. They finally received permission to remain in their rented dwellings till 1729 mainly out of consideration for the Christian landlords. It is worth noting that the latter begged to be allowed to continue to have their Jewish tenants, "since no injury was done by them to anyone, nor did they cause annoyance to the neighborhood." Such requests did not suit the citizens' committee at all. They did not fit in with its asseverations of the

universal prevalence of Jew-hatred in the population, but indicated rather that opposition between Jews and Christians was on the decline. In any case the change of heart did not find public expression in the legislation of the period. The hundred-year old Stättigkeit was still adhered to. No one in either Vienna or Frankfort thought of throwing it on the scrap heap, not even the Jews themselves. The strenuous, unbroken struggle with the citizens' committee and to some extent with the Council too was only for a mild interpretation of the various articles of the Stättigkeit, not for its abrogation. Therefore the Imperial rescript which freed the Jews from the obligation of wearing a badge on their clothing (1728) must be regarded as an especially long step forward. The same decree contained several other regulations favorable to the Jews, and so was a keen disappointment to the burghers' committee. For the nonce dislike of the Jews shoved into the background its long standing quarrel with the Council. It wished to join hands with the latter so that they might combine "with heartily gathered energies" to oppose the machinations of the Jews, "who absolutely must be kept in their servile status." But the Council would not think of uniting its forces with the party that had for years been at odds with it.

If in the Jewish question the burghers' committee was unable to gain its point, it was victorious along the whole line in its fight against the arbitrary rule of the Council. In 1732 the city constitution was amended so that the power of the Council was considerably curtailed by two boards of citizens, one

consisting of fifty-one members and one of nine. For our purposes it is of no interest to tell in detail what the powers of these boards were, but it suffices to say that they were soon invaded by a spirit of nepotism productive of a rigidity and ossification more crassly in evidence in them than in the Council. One quality survived eternally, hatred of the Jews, which always put forth new blossoms. In one petition to Vienna they pleaded "that the impudent Jewish folk be warned to keep quiet and pay better heed to the terms of their Stättigkeit." This because the Jews had presumed to complain of the regulation still in force that on the Christian holidays and on Sundays they were cut off from all intercourse with the outside world, and if perchance they were obliged to travel on such days, they were required to pay a high tax.

Two occurrences particularly served the enemies of the Jews. Meyer Moses, an alien Jew, had for unknown reasons stabbed the Burgomaster of Heidelberg, who was staying in Frankfort, and by committing suicide he had made punishment impossible. At about the same time, during the Easter fair, two Christian merchants suddenly disappeared in mysterious fashion. It turned out later that to escape debts that had fallen due they had absconded to their home, Thüringen, but as this happened at the Passover season credence was given to the reports spread by Christian shopkeepers that the Jews had lured the two men into the ghetto and had murdered them. A libellous publication against the Jews, breathing unending hate, made use of the murder of the Heidelberg mayor and contributed greatly to the persecu-

tion of the Jews, for it had a rapid sale in all households. It directly incited the people to disorders, and the Council was forced to the decision to confiscate it.

The Emperor was especially desirous of knowing that the Jews were secure and well protected, for since the Empire was again at war with France he needed them to strengthen his financial position. In the year 1734 he asked for neither more nor less than 100,000 florins in the form of a forced loan. The Jews refused, for the community was greatly in debt and the rich members were deeply involved in failures abroad. A carefully devised plan was put into effect to force payment. Carts were not driven into the Jewish quarter this time to haul property from the houses of the well-to-do, for the idea was to aim not only at such persons, but at the whole community, and, indeed, at its most sensitive spot. Soldiers, whom the city had to furnish for the purpose, mounted guard at the entrances to both synagogues, so that it was impossible to hold services. But the Jews remained stiff-necked. The women's bath was then locked and preparations were made to do likewise with the graveyard. Then the Jews yielded to the inevitable, and they had to count it as profit that the original sum asked was reduced by 30,000 florins.

The death of Charles VI in the year 1740 was the occasion for a general uprising against his daughter and heiress, Maria Theresa. Her enemies succeeded in securing the coronation of the Elector Charles Albert of Bavaria, which took place in Frankfort in 1742. He was the mere shadow of an emperor. As his lands were occupied by the enemy's hosts, he

passed the greater part of his short reign in Frankfort, powerless and inactive. However, he laid stress on the outward forms of power. He demanded of the Council that the Jews should be allowed to do him homage, a request that could not be denied. All the Council asked was that when the oath of allegiance was taken, no "offensive expressions" should be used that would tend to wipe out the distinction between Christians and Jews. It had happened previously on a similar occasion that the Jews had been addressed with the polite form as "Sie," which the Council considered most unseemly.

When the Imperial glory of Charles VII came to an end in 1745, the husband of Maria Theresa, Francis of Lorraine, was elected as his successor. During their reign the couple scarcely came into contact with the Jews of Frankfort, but it was not forgotten that they had to pay a crown tax and the Opferpfennig. A brief period of peace set in that lasted till 1756, when the Seven Years' War broke out. In the course of the war, in 1759, the French conquered Frankfort, which had to submit to years of foreign occupation. Of the inhabitants of the city, the Jews suffered least. Their privileges were respected by Count Thoranc, the *lieutenant du roi de France* made famous by Goethe in his autobiography of his youth. Soldiers were not billeted in the ghetto, and all that the Jewish community had to contribute to the expenses were some payments in kind and some monthly money charges not burdensome in extent. This can be pointed to as one of the rare instances in which the Jews were better off than the Christian population.

CHAPTER IX

ASCENSION OF JOSEPH II

The Seven Years' War ended, and the French withdrew from Frankfort. The life of the city could not return to the old accustomed grooves at once. The Council had fresh work, of a pleasant nature to be sure, which now caused some commotion. In April 1764 Emperor Francis I caused his son, the young Archduke Joseph, to be elected and crowned as his successor. The Council arranged, as on previous occasions of this sort, that on the day of the coronation no Jews should appear outside the ghetto, alleging that otherwise they would be exposed to the insults and annoyance of the populace. But the Jews were not so submissive as they had formerly been. One of their directors, Süssel Kulp, had connections in high circles through his position as court factor to various petty princes. Through the Imperial Vice-Chancellor, Prince Colloredo, he was able to influence the Council to withdraw the prohibition and to assume responsibility in case any Jew were insulted by so much as a word. The members of the community made most generous use of the new liberty. On the coronation day the Jewish quarter was practically deserted. Everybody went to see the festivities, and, as the minute book of the community records, greeted the coronation parade with loud huzzas. A deputation of the Jewish community was admitted to audience with the Emperor, the Arch-

duke, and various high dignitaries. There is an exact record of the way these ceremonies proceeded, how the Jews rode to them in great state in different kinds of carriages, what gifts were presented, how graciously they were received, how the Emperor assured them that henceforth he would bestow his favor on the Jewish community of Frankfort, how Kulp was allowed to kiss the hem of the Emperor's mantle and so forth.

The Jews had every reason to welcome the new Emperor with joy. His Jewish policy was entirely different from his mother's, who was obsessed by all the prejudices of her time. The noblest representative of enlightened despotism, he was a follower of the modern humane views held by the finest spirits of the time. It was not out of personal sympathy for the Jews, but merely from a sense of justice, and because he was of the opinion that their talents and their ability to work would become of greater benefit generally, that, January 2, 1782, he promulgated the Patent of Tolerance, which won for him so much praise and admiration from his contemporaries. It completely altered the status of the Jews in the Austrian patrimonial dominions, freed them from the mediaeval bonds that had fettered them, and was the first measure that paved the way to genuine citizenship. It abolished the body-tax; it permitted the purchase of land, and contained other liberal provisions. The Jews in the Empire generally might now hope to be raised from the humiliation of the exceptional position they occupied. The ghetto walls

The Ghetto, South Side

began to totter. The way to freedom no longer seemed to be barred. And yet the goal was still afar. The battle for emancipation to be fought out by the Jews in the next decades was an intense, difficult struggle. Before an attempt is made to sketch it briefly, I may be allowed a little digression. Let us direct our steps to the ghetto and view the culture that was embodied in its life, and ceased with emancipation.

When the houses of the Jewish quarter were rebuilt after the great conflagrations they were just as narrow-chested and high as before. The upper stories again projected over those below in the way we have described. High back buildings were put up in narrow yards just as before. As all the Jews had been forced back into the ghetto, it soon acquired the same wretched aspect it had presented a hundred years earlier. Far too many persons lived cramped together in much too small a space. We have no accurate estimate of the number of Jews in the community of that time. Three thousand, for the middle of the eighteenth century, is probably putting the figure too high. Whatever the number, the available space was absolutely insufficient. The street made an impression of being so overpopulated that many visitors from abroad in accounts of their travels tell tales of ten thousand, fifteen thousand inhabitants in the Frankfort ghetto. Let an anonymous writer of the year 1747 speak for himself, and give us a characterization of the ghetto as it impressed contemporaries. He writes: "Picture to yourself a long street, more than half a quarter of an hour long, shut in by houses at least five or six stories high. Think

of these houses as having houses back of them with scarcely enough yard space to admit daylight, every nook up to the roof full of rooms and chambers in which are crowded together 10,000 (!) human beings, who think themselves fortunate when they leave their dens to be able to breathe the air on their dirty, damp street. . . There you have an approximate idea of the Jews' quarter. The spaces in front of the houses are used all day long for all the employments of both men and women, for these miserable people could not stand working inside their houses." The former city walls which enclosed the ghetto gave it a decidedly prisonlike appearance. "Behind an old, black wall, thirty feet high, rose the gables of back buildings eight to ten feet broad. The roofs were crowded with chimneys. Chamber-pots, dirty bedding, and other such things were exposed to view at the upper and dormer windows, or, where they were missing, broken window panes showed, the target of mischievous boys, etc." This is the way the denizens of the Allerheiligengasse, which backed on the wall of the Jews' quarter, described the impression made by the ghetto from without.

The sanitary conditions beggar description. They were made all the worse by the bad arrangement of the water-closets, in some houses altogether lacking. The drainage pipes were badly laid, and were in thoroughly neglected condition. The yards were damp and filthy. A walk through the quarter was a worse torture for nose than for eye or ear. Nowhere was there green shrubbery or even a flower bed to delight the passer-by. "The children had no private

yard space or little garden where they could play their childish games," Börne complains. We have laid stress on the fact that the Jews were forbidden to promenade on the paths beyond the city gates as well as on the new avenues within the city.

These bad hygienic conditions naturally had a very unfavorable effect on health. One result of ghetto life exactly reversed the experience general elsewhere. The poorer people, who had to go to and fro day in and day out to seek their living, forced by this necessity to exercise in the open air, were much healthier than the rich merchants, who sat in their counting-houses, or than the scholars, who for weeks were immersed in their Talmud studies without setting foot outdoors. But, as elsewhere, the rich were able to arrange their lives more comfortably. Despite the general lack of space, they were not nearly so crowded as the poor. The latter had no room in their dwellings without a bed. If the family had many members, even the storeroom often had to serve for sleeping purposes. As a rule, there was no furniture but the bed in the little rooms, except in the one that was used also as the family living room. In this there would be a table and chairs, mostly of painted pine. Green seems to have been the favorite color. On account of lack of space, folding beds were popular. Otherwise they used four-posters with canopies, made preferably of blue and white checked linen. The house furnishings of the poorer Jews were most insufficient. Even their few possessions in the way of clothes and linens could not be kept in order for there was no room to set up ward-

robes, but were often packed in chests or even in barrels. The table utensils, plates, dishes, and pans were almost regularly of pewter. Only here and there do copper or brass cups, kettles, mortars, etc. occur. It speaks well for the idealism of the head of the household, if, with such scanty equipment for practical purposes, we find, as in the case of Seligmann at the Sign of the Golden Crown, about one hundred Hebrew books. Elkan Moses, at the Vogelsang, was a man of greater means than this Seligmann. He in a sense represented the middle classes, the stratum of propertied citizens. He had at his disposal a living room that did not have to serve as bedroom also. It must have been comfortable with its extension table, its armchairs, and the hanging six-branched candelabrum of brass as well as three brass sconces. There must have been some feeling for beauty, for the housewife not only displayed her fine pewter ware, but she cherished blooming plants in pots.

The dwellings of the really wealthy members of the community afforded a great contrast in furnishings to the simplicity of these homes. To convince ourselves of this, let us pay a visit to the home of Aaron Baer, in his day the very richest man in the Jewish quarter. He managed to secure for his own use a house with a back building, containing eight living rooms and seven bedchambers. Upon entering we get the impression of having been transported to a picture gallery, for the walls of the hall and stairways up to the top story are adorned with fine paintings. Unfortunately we do not know the names of the artists, but we may assume that they are prepon-

deratingly Dutch painters, for the master of the house travelled extensively in Holland, where his taste was undoubtedly formed. Everywhere on the staircase and in the hallways are brass chandeliers and sconces, so that the dark stairs can be made as bright as day for guests. On the first story we are surprised to see a large drawing room of cheerful, elegant appearance. White curtains at the windows admit as much light as is possible in the narrow ghetto street. Costly tapestries bedeck the walls on which are displayed pictures of still life. Twelve straight chairs upholstered in plush and six easy chairs indicate that this is the reception room for guests. There are also a cupboard, probably used for choice sweetmeats, and a "room cooler," possibly used to keep beverages cold. The other rooms of the house are furnished in just as costly fashion, with wardrobes, armchairs, mirrors, lighting devices, and above all with pictures. The eight living rooms do not hold all the fine furnishings, for the seven bedrooms also are well stocked with artistic household gear, silverware, ornaments, and rich draperies. In these rooms we find silk spreads, brocade curtains, valuable carpets. Here the tableware is not of pewter, as in the middle-class households, but the flatware and dishes are of gilded silver. This wealthy man owns gold and silver inkstands and snuffboxes, and canes with gold and silver heads. He even had a silver medicine chest, kept in a particularly valuable Augsburg cupboard. The large casks of fine wine in his cellar, the complete saddle outfits for no fewer than seven horses in the storeroom, testify to the

princely wealth of the owner and the magnificent style of the household. No one else in the ghetto equalled, but there were a number of families that approached him in wealth. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that all the jewelry and precious gems, all the silver table utensils, coat clasps, and boxes that filled chests and cases in the homes of the wealthy were inalienable family possessions. Some were probably pledges and property entrusted to them for care. Nevertheless the impression of unusual wealth remains. The furnishings of Aaron Baer, described above in detail, fell a prey to the flames in 1711, but we may assume that after the great conflagrations, the dwellings of the rich were adorned in similar fashion. In the narrow confines of the ghetto, the distinctions between rich and poor were peculiarly obvious.

Vocations in the ghetto were not definitely differentiated. The Jews were forced into the money-lending business, and by far the greater number of them devoted themselves to it. But what differences there were in the pursuit of this business! What gradations from the insignificant money-lender, who let small shopkeepers have a few florins on pledges of little value, to the money-lenders in grand style! Some of these might have designated themselves bankers as early as the eighteenth century. They attended to the business affairs of gentlemen of high rank in the secular world and in the church, such as, for example, the electors of Mayence. As court factors they had substantial connections with the great and the petty princes of the region about

Frankfort. We have frequently mentioned, especially in connection with the struggles with the guilds, that the trade in pledges did not always remain on the low plane of second-hand business, but that, despite the restrictive provisions of the Stättigkeit, many Jews were able to make their way in various branches of trade. New matters of dispute in the sphere of business arose when in the second half of the eighteenth century the trade in colonial luxuries, such as coffee, tea, sugar, etc., and also in brandy, to which in those days, strange to say, considerable nutritional value was attributed, received a great impetus in Frankfort, and the Jews engaged in the sale of these commodities. In the year 1616 they were so scarce that the Stättigkeit of that date made no provision in regard to them, and the Jews were not forbidden to trade in them. Hence the path to disputes with the Christian traders in colonial goods was smoothed. In those years of warfare, many Jews were able to make a great deal of money by army contracts.

But there were other callings in the ghetto besides trade of all sorts. The most respected, by far, was that of physician. We do not know when the first Jewish doctor settled in the city on the Main. In 1345 we find a certain Isaac mentioned as *medicus Judeorum*. At the end of the fourteenth century Solomon Pletsch from Regensburg rejoiced in a considerable reputation. The Council even appointed him as the city surgeon. Altogether, in those earlier days, Jewish doctors, as, indeed, Jews generally, were held in much greater respect than in later times.

Whereas up to the middle of the sixteenth century they could practise on the citizens unmolested by their Christian colleagues, from then on they were violently attacked especially by the physicians and the evangelical clergy. There were increasing complaints of the "free Jew-doctors, who run about here to patients in the homes of citizens and cure them into the grave." The Jewish physicians newly to be appointed, all of whom had received their degrees in Padua, since the German universities were closed to them, had to appear before a city board of commissioners and submit to an examination, one not judged with strict impartiality. However even though this board of examiners always found great gaps in the knowledge of the Jewish doctors, they stood in high favor with the Christian public, and were much sought after by the burghers. This remarkable phenomenon can be explained in the same way as we nowadays explain the resort to quacks. It was believed that there were mysterious magical powers in the Jews, who as strangers in their midst wore a halo in the eyes of the people, so that, even if they were perchance descended from the devil himself, they still appeared able to effect more than the Christian physicians for all their scientific knowledge. The Jews themselves regarded it as a great disadvantage that their physicians were so often called away and were not at hand when needed by them. That was why in the seventeenth century a change was made, and a permanent community physician was appointed, an arrangement readily approved by the Council in spite of the objection at first raised by the Christian

physicians. It is interesting to see what fee the first community physician might claim. He was to treat the poor for nothing, taking no compensation from them even if they offered it of their own free will. From the middle classes, too, he must not ask pay, but had to be satisfied with what they gave him, whether much or little. He might present a bill only to the really well-to-do, but it was never to exceed two rix-dollars. However, if more were offered to him, he might accept it. In later times, the fee rose considerably. In all cases the treatment of children was to be cheaper than that of adults. The physicians enjoyed one special advantage—they were relieved of all communal taxes.

In the eighteenth century the Jewish physicians of Germany were gradually given freer scope. They no longer had to travel to distant Padua for study or degrees. Various German universities were open to them, as, Göttingen, Königsberg, and the surgical clinics of Berlin. But afterward as before Jewish physicians remained inferiors in the opinion of the Frankfort Council, and were treated accordingly. They were forbidden to enter a druggist's shop, but had to wait outside for a prescription to be filled. Their number was strictly limited. The Council would not tolerate more than two or three physicians in the ghetto. In the year 1799, when the spirit of the times had completely changed, it consented to admit a fourth doctor.

Of the learned professions, that of rabbi must first be mentioned. The selection of a rabbi was a strictly internal affair of the Jews. The Council hardly con-

cerned itself with their religious life. So rich and important a community naturally regarded it as an honorable duty to choose distinguished Talmud scholars for their religious leaders, and they were often fortunate enough to attract one of distinction to Frankfort. We have mentioned the famous compiler of the *Midrash Yalkut* as well as the unfortunate Naphtali Cohen, who caused the great conflagration. Of importance for his scholarship was Rabbi Süsslen Alexander Hakohen, the compiler of the celebrated work, *Aguddah* (Collection), "the latest redaction embracing the whole Talmud," as it was called.

The functions of the rabbi as the religious head of the community were very broad and not sharply defined. Besides his activities as teacher, he was entrusted with making decisions not only in religious questions but also in matters of civil law. The rabbi officiated at weddings and divorces and the settlement of disputes. He possessed a powerful means of compulsion, which lent weight to his orders, the ban. It is not to be denied that some rabbis abused their power, so that the Emperor and many officials of the Empire took pains to remove the edge from this terrible weapon. Till late in the Middle Ages the rabbi received no compensation for his office, but, especially in the earlier days, made a living by money-lending and pawnbroking. Later, when he was appointed as an official of the community at a fixed salary and was given his house rent-free, he kept aloof from all business activities.

Many Jewish students gathered about a learned rabbi famed far and wide for his talmudic knowl-

edge, and were called *schaland*, possibly a corruption of *scholans* (scholar). The Council was not favorably inclined to the Jewish students and never willingly tolerated in the city a large number of these "vermin," as it amiably expressed itself. As soon as it thought that too many of them were gathering in Frankfort, it tried to raise their residence tax so high that most of them could not pay it; or it demanded of the rabbi a payment of a great sum, six gold florins a year, for each student he taught. If he could not pay, he had to send all his students away. If in spite of these measures, the Council did not succeed in keeping Frankfort free of Jewish students it at least restricted them almost entirely to the ghetto. They were not allowed to walk on the other streets even to make purchases, except when one was officially commissioned to do the errands for all. As a matter of course, they might not take walks in the country for that was forbidden all Jews. So in these Jewish students we see poor pitiable creatures forbidden everything that usually makes life pleasant for young people — wandering at pleasure in woods and fields, happy gatherings and revels, wanton pranks, and tricks of all sorts, without which we can hardly think of student life then or now. They probably did not even consider these joys their due. They lived completely in the service of the Torah and found their satisfaction in it. Only once a year, at the feast of Purim, when the whole ghetto lost somewhat of its sad aspect came a break in the monotony of their existence. Then they changed into comedians and held a sort of carnival play, celebrating the glorious

victory of Mordecai and Esther over the wicked enemy Haman.

The rabbis devoted themselves to higher instruction. Elementary teaching was in the hands of the school teachers whom we have mentioned. There was nothing that could be called a public school till the beginning of the sixteenth century. Well-to-do Jews often employed a private tutor. Instruction ceased at the age of thirteen years, when the boys were *Bar Mizvah*. No stress was laid on teaching Jewish girls Hebrew. In very early times the Bible and prayers had been translated for them into Jüdisch-Deutsch, which in the Middle Ages differed little from the vernacular of the place in which they lived.

About the middle of the seventeenth century the heads of the community began to give more consideration to the school teaching, which had hitherto been without supervision. The number of regular teachers was fixed at ten and of assistants at thirty. In 1675 it was decided that no school teacher should teach more than eight hours a day in winter and nine in summer. The salary was put at four rix-dollars for every semester hour; that is, a total of thirty-six and forty-five thalers respectively. Obviously, with this scale of pay, the material situation of the teachers was not exactly brilliant. In all Jewish communities, the position of teachers was embarrassing, humiliating. They were dependent on the parents of their pupils, and were forever in a state of anxiety lest one be taken from them. It is characteristic of the conditions in Frankfort that toward the end of the

seventeenth century one teacher had the additional office of beer tapster, whereas another sold books.

School began early in the morning. In winter the boys had to get up one or two hours before daybreak to go to the teacher's house. They had only a few holidays, Purim, the fifteenth day of the month of Ab, the fifteenth of the month of Shebat, and the thirty-third day of the *Omer* (the reckoning from the second day of Passover to Pentecost), called specifically the pupils' holiday. On these days the teacher was even bound immediately after the conclusion of the morning service to offer his pupils good gingerbread and brandy at his own expense. Instruction was given according to very simple methods. Whipping was the chief disciplinary measure. "All subjects," including *Gemara*, were taught, but what was meant by "all subjects" is very obscure. It was certainly not anything that had to do with the culture of the times, for, when toward the end of the seventeenth century some parents began to have their boys taught French and other modern languages, the pious were roused to the greatest pitch of indignation.

Among the subordinate officials of the synagogue were the precentor and the Schulklopper (or "synagogue-knocker"). Sometimes the two officers were combined in one person. The main duty of the Schulklopper—as the name itself suggests—was to knock at the doors of the members of the congregation to warn them that it was time for prayers to begin. Even though the hours were fixed there were always the tardy, who needed a special summons, to

reckon with. The number of knocks and the manner of knocking varied in different communities but was settled in each according to ancient use and wont. Usually the Schulklopper also filled the position of communal servant. He was exempt from the payment of the Stättigkeit tax, but he was not supposed to occupy himself with money-lending or any other profitable activity in the way of trade.

Handicraft was not the proverbial mother of money in the Frankfort ghetto. In the course of centuries very few Jewish artisans are mentioned. Altogether the Jews in Germany, in contrast to those in the Romance and Slavic countries, counted almost no artisans in their number. Still, here and there, mention is made of a Jewish artisan, a tailor, a cabinet-maker, a dyer in black. Somewhat more frequently we find craftsmen, such as seal engravers and goldsmiths, the latter very well off financially. We hear also of bookbinders, who usually dealt in bound books too, and Jewish printers, who had to be tolerated because they alone could set Hebrew type. Representatives of two crafts regularly appeared in the ghetto—bakers and butchers. There were usually, however, only two bakers at a time. More could not earn a livelihood, because the Jews were obliged to buy part of the baked wares they needed from the Christian bakers. The case was different with the butchers. At the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, six plied their trade in the ghetto at the same time in addition to a woman butcher, two slaughterers, and three meat-choppers as well as someone who *kashered* the

meat. The Council could not raise objection to any of these, for the Jews ate only meat ritually slaughtered which could not be secured from the guild butchers. For that same reason, we hear little of hostility toward them on the part of their Christian fellow-tradesmen.

For ritual reasons, similarly, the Council had to permit taverns in the ghetto. As early as 1389 a Jewish tavernkeeper Abraham is mentioned, who was also allowed to take in boarders. When the Council forced the Jews into the ghetto in 1462, it provided for two taverns, but up to the middle of the fifteenth century we find only one innkeeper. The occupation seems to have been handed down from father to son. Nevertheless the Council had the right at any time to withdraw the privileges of "entertainment" from the innkeeper if too many complaints against him were voiced. This happened frequently, for in party disputes, which often raged in the small precincts of the ghetto just as they did out in the great world, the tavernkeeper liked to remain neutral, and in order to remain on good terms with both sides he lost favor with all. From 1490 on we also find a wine tapster in the Jewish quarter. One can readily picture the constant disputes between tavernkeepers and vintners over the delimitation of the respective spheres assigned to them. Probably the case was the same between them and masters of cook-shops, but we have no details to indicate what their field of activity was. We may take it for granted that they were in demand for family celebrations, especially for weddings. Jewish musicians,

who are often mentioned, must have used their skill mainly at weddings, at least in the ghetto itself. Outside of their quarter in the city they were to be found on all possible occasions. Since the Stättigkeit did not take special cognizance of musicians, they thought themselves entitled to such liberty. When fair time came, especially, they played to large gatherings of generous visitors—to the annoyance of the Christian musicians. The latter poured so many complaints of Jewish competition into the ears of the Council that it limited the number of Jewish musicians to four, and forbade their playing outside of the ghetto on pain of the loss of their Stättigkeit.

We find scarcely any true day-laborers in the ghetto. The reason is plain to see. There were always a number of poor or badly paid persons who eked out their living by doing occasional jobs like wood-chopping for trifling fees. There was, however, no lack of domestic servants. In fact, the number was disproportionately large. The suspicion cherished by the Council that under cover of this name alien Jews who had not secured a Stättigkeit were smuggled in, was not entirely without foundation. The Council therefore was always intent on getting rid of Jewish servants to keep their number down. As has been mentioned, the Jews were forbidden by divers decrees to employ Christian domestics.

Beside domestic servants, among specifically feminine occupations, we hear of seamstresses and lacemakers in the ghetto. Another calling reserved for women was one that crosses into the field of business,

that of *Hockin*. This name is still used in Frankfort for the women who sit in the market or at certain street-crossings and sell vegetables, fruits, eggs, and butter. We may readily imagine that the feelings with which the Christian *Hockinnen* regarded their Jewish colleagues were not of exactly tender nature, and that they tried their best to have their right to move about restricted as much as possible.

As in every communal organization, there were a number of members who, besides their activity in their vocations, were obliged to assume honorary offices. So far as the relations of the Jews to the rest of the world were concerned, they were held in tutelage by the city government. But with their internal administration the city authorities meddled just as little as with their religious life. The result was that the Jewish group was completely autonomous in the affairs of its own organization and had full jurisdiction in minor matters. The Council concerned itself with their affairs only when, as frequently happened in the course of time, parties in dispute called upon it to act as arbitrator. Political party feeling within the walls of the ghetto often ran high, showing that the unexampled oppression of the outer world did not render the Jews dull and indifferent.

As a result of internal dissensions, after the return of the Jews to the ghetto in the year 1628, the organization of the community was, to put it briefly, about as follows:—twelve trustees, called *Baumeister*, had charge of communal affairs and represented the community to the outer world. In the course of the year

every trustee had a turn at presiding, two acting as chairmen for two months at a time. The term of office was three years. When a vacancy occurred through the expiration of a term, it was filled partly by coöptation, partly by a complicated system of election. Every male member of the community was entitled to a vote after reaching the age of twenty-five years provided he paid taxes on property of more than 1,000 florins. Little less important than the *Baumeister* were the five masters of the chest or treasurers. They had almost unlimited power over the Jewish treasury, the "Chest", as it was called. They also were elected by a rather roundabout method, by the directors and thirty to forty select members of the community. The time in office amounted to three terms of six years each. The truth of the matter, however, was that once elected the treasurers, like the *Baumeister*, were usually reëlected and therefore held lifetime office. For practical reasons, at a later period, two of the treasurers served also as *Baumeister*. The two oldest treasurers kept the books, in summary fashion to be sure, levied the taxes, conducted the reässessment of property every six years, managed the funds of the community, and so forth. The three newer treasurers did not participate fully in the conduct of business. To keep the constitution from petrifying, there was a by-law that from time to time new regulations must be made. In the second half of the seventeenth century the political life of the ghetto was so active that this occurred frequently, but in the early part of the eighteenth century it ceased to be

done. There was a preference for tradition and holding fast "to the good old customs." The masses no longer took part in ghetto politics, but permitted the highest offices to remain in the same families. The two big conflagrations had destroyed the wealth of the majority and had forced them to bend their energies almost exclusively on earning their daily bread. Thus it came about that the head of the worthy Kann family, named Baer Loew, made himself dictator, so to speak, and tried to rule the community by issuing orders on his own authority.

A revolutionary movement broke out in 1749, the purpose of which was to break down Kann's power. It was encouraged and led by two members of the ruling class, Kulp and Beyfuss, both trustees, who now waged a bitter conflict with Kann and his following. In the course of the agitation, hostilities between the disputants rose to such a pitch that there were serious riots in the Jewish quarter and the matter threatened to be settled not with words but with fists and weapons. More than once the city military had to intervene and scatter the mob by force. For a long time the quarter had to be under constant military occupation to prevent acts of violence. The mediation of the Council proved fruitless. The Emperor himself had to intervene. The contest, which lasted a number of years, was however not in vain. Kulp had indeed completely bled himself and spent all his fortune to reach his aim, but Kann's rule was forever overturned. The members of the community began to understand something of their finances and taxes, which the treasurers had so

long kept in the dark, and they had to acknowledge that their budget showed a considerable deficit.

The Emperor ordered a new constitution to be drawn up which was completed in 1754. On the whole it showed some advance toward freedom. To be sure the timocratic basis remained. The community was divided into three classes according to their means, and the method of election was indirect and highly complicated. The unrestricted power of the few, however, was a thing of the past. A special administrative board was established to control those in authority and prevent breaches of the constitution and some share in legislation was given to the members.

Just as the Jews had complete autonomy in their finances and in the administration of communal affairs, in their schools and religious arrangements, so it was incumbent upon them to provide police supervision and care for the safety and cleanliness of their quarter. In the last third of the eighteenth century the community appointed two street inspectors for the purpose, and allowed them a communal servant as assistant. The Jews themselves had to appoint the guards at the ghetto gates. Watchmen attended to the security of the street during the night. There were five night watchmen at the time of the great conflagrations.

About the middle of the eighteenth century besides free lodging they received only fifteen florins annually. This modest income, even in those days when money had a very different purchasing power from now, was not enough to live on, and so during

the day these men had to work at additional jobs. The result was that they entered upon their night duties in an overtired condition. Since, therefore, no reliance could be placed upon their watchfulness, and justifiable dread of fire existed, an honorary official chosen by lot was appointed as special fire guard. Nevertheless, the trustees often had to complain that the members of the community filled their posts very imperfectly, either not reporting for duty at all or running away too early. In the last third of the eighteenth century the Jews organized their own fire-brigade with a crew of at least two hundred and fifty men. The fire-brigade was not released from duty even on the Sabbath. If a fire broke out even on a Saturday or a festival and even outside the ghetto in the city proper, it had to turn out. The fire-brigade was under another magistracy, the so-called deputies, appointed by the trustees but confirmed by the Council. To these deputies, twelve in number, was soon entrusted also the police control of prostitutes and foreigners, a wide range of activities for their energies. The Polish beggars, who had hitherto regarded the Frankfort ghetto as an Eldorado, now fell upon hard times. The application of Draconic measures in this case may be understood. What is less easily understood is that these deputies pulled together with the boards of the burghers when occasion arose to suppress the little bit of good cheer which now and again brightened the difficult conditions of life in the gloomy ghetto. To the deputies the games of schoolboys, the finery of the girls, all such things, were a thorn in the flesh.

But it is not possible for people to bear the routine of life day in and day out without interrupting it by feasts, even though modest ones. And so there were occasions even in the ghetto when festivities were arranged. Practically every recreation that was indulged in took place indoors, because all sorts of prohibitions made outdoor life in the midst of nature very difficult for the Jews, and the narrow, stifling street itself had little space for frolics. It was only on Purim that there was mummery. Then there was masquerading of all sorts. You might see Jews, wearing armor and carrying swords and spears, tumble about, and listen to the students' carnival comedies enlivened with the crude tricks of the clown. Promenading even on the Wollgraben close to the Judengasse was again and again forbidden. When, about the middle of the eighteenth century, a sort of rifle-club was formed by the Jews and set up its targets on the bleaching grounds which belonged to the community, the Council called it a piece of impertinence and arrogance. The rifles had to be given up and the society disbanded. So there remained only the four walls of the houses within which recreation might be sought and games played. The most distinguished game was chess. The masses, however, in spite of all prohibitions and penalties were passionately fond of cards. Finally card-playing was allowed only for the amusement of women in childbed, and when these would gather large parties to play, the laws could not touch them.

All family festivals, *berit milah*, *bar mizvah*, and above all weddings, were celebrated with special

splendor. On account of the limited space in the homes, weddings were held in the communal dance hall. Such feasts were always bountiful and resplendent despite the restriction placed upon them by various laws concerning banquets and luxuries, which fixed the number of foods and the kinds of pastries to be offered, and forbade the wearing of rich attire and certain costly materials, such as satin woven with gold and silver threads. The main celebration, in accordance with old custom, was combined with a preliminary feast and one that followed. At these two parties rich meals were served. But in the midst of the gaieties of a wedding—and this distinguished Jewish feasts from those of the Christians—the merriment would cease and give way to a general mood of earnestness when the bridegroom arose and preached a *derashah*, a sort of scholarly sermon, to show the new relatives his talmudic learning. That often started a spirited religious discussion. The young husband gathered in gifts too, which were in some sort tokens of gratitude for the edification the guests had received from his speech.

CHAPTER X

INNER LIFE OF THE GHETTO

At the beginning of the year 1790 occurred the death of Joseph II. He had been disappointed in his life's work, for he was one of those whose noble aspirations were not sustained by commensurate energy. His death was a severe blow to the Jews of Frankfort. Travelling on business in the Austrian domains many of them had been filled with astonishment at the extent to which the Jews there had risen from their former state of oppression. Schools had been established for them; all the sources of contemporary culture had been opened to them; exalted dignitaries, even princes of the Church, espoused their cause. The Frankfort Jews had hoped to secure a similar status by the mediation of the Imperial Aulic Council. They looked at least for the abolition of the most crying inconveniences made into law by the Stättigkeit so frequently mentioned above, to which the generation of that time would not submit with the patience of their fathers. The prohibition that forbade strolling or walking in the city, the precise regulation of the route to be taken to the Mayence market-boat or to the various post offices, the rule that made a pass from the mayor necessary if one wished to go on the streets beyond the ghetto, all these were attacked. Upon the urgency of neighboring princes, at whose courts Frankfort Jews were factors, the Council had to drop the provision for-

bidding Jews to start journeys on Sunday. For the most part, however, for fear of offending the boards of citizens, it was unyielding. As late as 1784 and 1785 the trustees of the Jewish community pleaded for permission to leave the city on Sundays and holidays at least upon the conclusion of the church services, that is, at about five o'clock in the afternoon. When the Council finally acceded, but reserved the right to recall this permission and made the conditions that the Jews should go out by only one gate and not walk on the glacis, the trustees celebrated this rigidly circumscribed concession as an outflow of extreme humanity.

The subservient attitude of the trustees deeply offended many of the members of the community. Once before they had been reproached with lacking courage to uphold the interests of the community against unauthorized and arbitrary ordinances of the Council. They had submitted in silence when the younger burgomaster had forbidden the Jews to leave the ghetto in order to see the ascension of Blanchard's balloon, the wonder of the age, an event that had caused the greatest excitement in the whole town. To prevent any circumvention of the prohibition, he had even stationed military guards at the ghetto gates. The pretext that he wished to protect the Jews from possible insults if they ventured out among the populace seemed rather flimsy, and the general opinion was that the trustees should have made much more vigorous protest than they did. These occurrences brought the office of director into disrepute. Whereas in an earlier period every well-

to-do Jew had regarded it as a distinction to hold an honorary post in the community, it now came about that trustees remained in office longer than was prescribed by law simply because no successors could be found. The point was finally reached when the Council had to concern itself with internal Jewish affairs and make suitable changes in the election methods. This intermezzo is of definite interest. The office not only of the trustees but also of the treasurers, for which two candidates were often not forthcoming, was dependent on a certain census, and therefore the assessments of the members of the community were published. We are consequently furnished with detailed information about the economic condition of the Frankfort Jews at the close of the century. The community had far less wealth than rumor attributed to it. In the highest class according to income were reckoned fifty-four persons, who might therefore be called wealthy. In the next, there were eighty-three well-to-do persons. The rest of the families, nearly five hundred in number, had little.

In the autumn of the year 1790, the election and coronation of the new Emperor, Leopold II, took place in the usual manner. In spite of the ideas prevalent in the period of the Revolution, the Council was not afraid to bar the Jews from the streets during the festivities. A few rich court factors had been able to secure special permits, and so could satisfy their desire to see the sights. The Jews generally, not wishing to ignore the important event, had to rest content with a celebration of their own within

the ghetto, which took place on the festival of *Simhat Torah*. The usual audience of the heads of the community and the presentation of gifts took place. But the new Emperor had asked to be spared the customary obeisance and speech made on bended knees. The community rejoiced at the gracious acceptance of their tribute of respect, and pinned their hopes to it. The new Emperor, it was soon discovered, followed his dead brother's footsteps in his Jewish policy, but in Austria a perceptible reaction set in. The progress of the Revolution in France was causing anxiety.

The reign of Leopold II was brief. On July 14, 1792, his successor, Francis II, was crowned Emperor in Frankfort. Everything proceeded as before in the ghetto as elsewhere. The very same men waited upon the Emperor and so forth. Francis appeared to be friendly to the Jews. Upon a petition of the trustees he forced the Council, which had planned to lock the Jewish quarter during the festivities, to revoke their order. His first acts as ruler, however, showed that he was no son of the new era but a most credulous adherent of the old patriarchal regime. In his treatment of the Jews, he completely broke with the policy of his two predecessors, and followed in the paths of Maria Theresa. All the opponents of the Jews, who for years had been deprived of influence, again came to the fore. They spoke warningly against liberal aspirations, arguing that, as events in Paris proved conclusively to any unprejudiced person, they must inevitably lead to complete political disorganization.

So nothing was to be expected from Vienna. But what was the state of public opinion in Germany? What did leading spirits of the Age of Philosophy and Enlightenment think? In a work entitled "Upon the Civil Improvement of the Jews," which had caused a widespread sensation, a writer named Dohm had boldly demanded equal civil, though not yet political, rights for the Jews. In his drama "Nathan the Wise" Lessing had elevated a member of the Jewish race to the heights of humanity. If a learned professor in Göttingen, Michaelis, opined that such a figure belonged to the realm of fantasy, not of reality, a living witness to the contrary was Lessing's friend Moses Mendelssohn, among whose admirers was numbered the King of Prussia, Frederick William II.

In Germany generally, however, indifference and lack of understanding in regard to the Jewish question prevailed. Redemption was to come not from it but from France. The declaration of the rights of man, the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, promulgated by the victorious French Revolution, did not stop when the Jews were reached. On September 27, 1791, the Constituent National Assembly abolished all differences between the Jewish and the Christian population, and granted everybody without any restriction all civil and political rights. This law inevitably took effect on the princes beyond the Rhine. A year later the victorious forces of the young French republic were making their way into Germany. Speyer and Worms, Mayence, the bulwark of the Empire, indeed the whole region to the left of the Rhine, fell into their hands. On

October 22, 1792, led by Custine, the French entered Frankfort.

The attempts of the French to win over the middle and lower classes to their revolutionary convictions and stir them to revolt against the Council failed completely. In the portion of the city on the left bank of the Main in Sachsenhausen, they gained individual adherents, and there they planted a tree of liberty, but the majority of the population did not waver in their loyalty and devotion to the Council. They did not look upon the intruders as their redeemers from a heavy yoke, but mainly as enemies whose occupation of the city burdened them with enormous war expenses.

The stay of the French in the city was of brief duration. On November 28, Prussian and Hessian troops approached from the east and north. From the ramparts the different types of soldiers could easily be distinguished and the whole population rejoiced. The Jews, too, despite the fact that they had not been maltreated or in any way troubled by the French occupation, welcomed the approaching army as liberators. When the Prussian officer with the flag of truce who was to call upon the French commandant of the city to surrender appeared in the streets, they surrounded him and escorted him to the French general's quarters, continually crying out, "Long live the King of Prussia! Down with the French!" A contemporary writer notes in his memoirs that "their joy could not have been greater if their Messiah had appeared in Frankfort." It could not have been taken amiss if the Jews had

enthusiastically greeted as liberators the champions of that nation which had just granted the rights of citizens to their coreligionists, but they evidently felt that they were sons of the soil on which their homes, without adequate protection to be sure, had stood for centuries.

Whether the Council wished to deprive the Jews of every opportunity to express their patriotism or whatever its motives were, it made short work and locked up the ghetto completely from the evening of November 28 to the morning of December 2. The soldiers of the city garrison placed at the gates obeyed orders so implicitly that they would let no one pass out even to go to the post office or to fetch physicians or medicines.

The French commandant refused to yield, and early December 2 a storm broke loose in the city. By reason of its location the Jewish quarter was more than any other part of the city exposed to the fire of the Prussian-Hessian army. Cannon balls and grenades shattered the walls, swept the chimneys from the roofs, and caused devastation in the houses. Here and there flames leapt up. "Shrieks and cries of terror filled the air . . . All our fire engines stood ready because every minute we feared to see the street in flames." Thus the trustees of the community described the situation to the Council.

The battle soon was decided in favor of the attackers, for they met with aid from the people within the city. A mob gathered, formed by numbers of travelling artisans, who abused and disarmed the French soldiers, took possession of the cannon, and by force

opened the gates. The Hessians and Prussians marched into the city, and the French commandant was taken prisoner. French officers under arrest in Marburg, knowing that their lives were in danger if they were held responsible for a defeat, defended themselves by charging the Frankfort Jews with having caused the deplorable outcome, saying that they had treacherously joined the alien apprentices. Fortunately the commander-in-chief Custine did not take stock in this charge. "Caged birds," he said, "whistle the tunes that are played to them." Would "this timid folk," the Jews, be likely to commit such a crime? "Was not the French nation the first in Europe to grant them the universal rights of man and free them from most shameful slavery?"

In spite of Custine's declaration, the Jews were deeply agitated by the calumnious assertions made against them. Many of them had to travel on business in France or in the provinces occupied by the French, and they were anxious lest they should be "strangled a thousandfold" for their alleged treason and assassination, or at least that their persons and property would be in great danger. In a petition signed by eighty of the most respected members of the community, they resolutely threatened the Council that if it did not bestir itself on their behalf they would appeal to the public for the restoration of their good name. The Council rebuked them for the impropriety of their expressions, but in a newspaper publication it exonerated them of all guilt.

The French did not spare the city long. The warlike march of events was such that in the first part of

June 1796 the commander of the Army of the Meuse and Sambre crossed the Rhine and forced the Austrians under General Wartensleben back to the Lahn.

Frankfort was again in danger of becoming the scene of warfare. A difficult time faced the city and the Jewish community. In his retreat, General Wartensleben did indeed occupy Frankfort and apparently made all preparations to defend it vigorously. In reality, he was merely trying to delay the French somewhat. The rumor of threatened bombardment had hardly spread in Frankfort when universal panic seized the populace. The undisciplined bands of soldiers of the Army of the Meuse and Sambre caused the worst to be feared if the city should be taken. All fled that could possibly do so. The Jewish quarter was practically emptied. Most of the inhabitants, mindful of the shelling in December, securely locked their houses with all the furnishings in them, and fled pell-mell to Offenbach nearby.

On June 12 the French approached the city from the north, and at two o'clock in the night started a frightful cannonade which lasted an hour, and which, after an attempt to treat had failed, was resumed the next morning at eleven o'clock. The arsenal, in which they supposed the munition supplies of the garrison to be, was their chief target. But their bombs missed it and struck the Judengasse close by, causing fire to break out in various places. The flames raged unchecked for about twenty-four hours, for there was no one to extinguish them. Most of the houses burned down with all their furnishings in them. Reports of the number vary from 119 to 140.

Wartensleben capitulated early in the day of July 14. Two days later the French marched in a second time. They remained till September 8. The city had to pay the enemy exorbitant sums of money, almost beyond their means, so that even the silver and gold church vessels found their way to the mint. In these circumstances, with the best of wills, the Council was powerless to alleviate the distress caused the Jews by the fire. On the contrary, it made requisition upon them as upon all the other inhabitants of the city for the enormous tribute levied. The Jews reckoned their losses, quite apart from any war taxes, at two million florins. Where were they to find the wherewithal for rebuilding their houses? They anxiously revolved this problem in their minds, for few seriously thought that this conflagration, the third in a century, had destroyed the ghetto for all time. Particularly the heads of the city government could not conceive a world without the ghetto. The city architect, Hess, made several plans which had as their fundamental idea a renewed, enlarged Jewish quarter. He made concessions to the spirit of the time. There were to be no high walls, and therefore no gates and no possibility of completely shutting the quarter off. The street was to be made considerably broader and to be built up without the back buildings that constituted so great a fire hazard. Furthermore, the Jews were to be allowed to live mingled with Christians in the new streets laid out near the Main and on the old moat that had been filled in. The effect would have been to confine the Jews to a definite part of the city, but to make lock-

ing them in a ghetto impossible. To the Council, and even more to the citizens' boards, these proposals seemed decidedly too advanced and revolutionary. The Council could not consider a new method of building. In fact, it could not decide to rebuild at all, for money was scarce, and as war conditions continued times were insecure. It thus came about that most of the Jews dwelt in the city among the other inhabitants. Both groups became accustomed to the situation and no unpleasantness ensued.

This period of transition, coïnciding with the turn of the century, meant a great deal to the Jews of Frankfort. The conviction was borne in upon even those who were most reluctant to accept new ideas that the one-sided Hebrew education which had hitherto been all that the Jewish school offered its pupils no longer sufficed, and that it was necessary to participate in contemporary culture. The struggle for the abolition of the ghetto of the intellect had begun long before flames had destroyed the material ghetto. At first only a small group adopted the new ideas, and was ready to clear away trash and mold so that these ideas might fall on fertile soil. Most of the members of the community, their secular and spiritual leaders at their head, wished to live and think in accordance with the tradition of their ancestors, not altering a jot or tittle. They feared, possibly with some justification, that the whole structure would tumble if an attempt were made to remove some of the old girders and replace them with new ones.

The first struggle centered about Mendelssohn's Bible translation. The spiritual head of the com-

munity, Rabbi Pinkes Hurwitz, who was celebrated throughout the Jewish world for his talmudic scholarship but who had very imperfect command of the German language, made an impassioned address in the synagogue, warning his hearers against this work. He called it mockery of the teachings of the sages and an undertaking of unprecedented wickedness in Israel. He did not succeed in preventing some of the members, forty-seven in number, from subscribing to the translation. This was the first step. The younger generation could not be restrained. They recognized how different was the culture of the Jews elsewhere in the Empire and in Prussia, how different their position in the world from those of their Frankfort coreligionists. They had had freedom to move about much longer than the Jews in the city on the Main. For the most part, they themselves were to blame for their intellectual isolation, and they felt that this condition ought to be changed. In the Jewish salons of Berlin were to be met all German scholars and artists of importance. The most intelligent disciples of Kant, the sage of Koenigsberg, were Jews like David Friedländer and Markus Herz, who sat at his feet and dispensed his teachings. In the meanwhile the Jews of Frankfort could not even speak German, but used the Judeo-German dialect. The first need then was to acquire mastery of the German language. This had to be done by way of the German text-book and the German school, which the Jews in other parts of Germany had long realized and in accordance with which they had long acted. As one example may be mentioned the Jacob-

son school in Seesen in the Harz Mountains. The opinion gained ground in the Frankfort community. The rich families had for some time been employing tutors to give their children the elements of German culture, writing, reading, arithmetic, and also French, in addition to the one-sided instruction of the Jewish elementary and high schools. A few Jewish pupils—the number was so small as to be negligible—had been accepted at the city *Gymnasium*. Then a number of families decided to establish a private school to relieve the lack so grievously felt. They applied to the director of the city school system for advice, and soon came out with a plan that laid most stress on German, French, and arithmetic. This curriculum, which ignored Hebrew and made a complete break with the past, occasioned a great sensation and aroused no slight indignation among the directors of the community, who stepped forth on the field of battle as champions of the old tradition. At their bidding, the Chief Rabbi pronounced the ban on the new school about to be established. He was compelled by the Council to withdraw the ban, since it was regarded as an invasion of the personal privileges of Jewish parents. Neither the directors nor those they attacked accepted the situation quietly. One in search of exact information upon the attitude of the Jewish community of Frankfort in those days will find it not uninteresting to read the documents in which both parties state their grievances. Since the Council adhered strictly to its refusal to allow the ban, the directors appealed to the Court of Appeal in Wetzlar in a very characteristic document, the reac-

tionary attitude of which considerably surpassed that of the Council. The Court of Appeal not only denied the plea of the directors, but fined them one gold mark for their clear abuse of the right of appeal. Unfortunately we learn nothing of the fate of the school, for which there had been many applicants. It is doubtful whether it ever came into existence at all. The reactionary party, nevertheless, still having the whip hand, avenged itself in other ways on the followers of the new tendencies. It went so far in one case as to deny decent burial and a suitable burial place.

Since some of the Jews no longer lived behind walls but in the city, exposed to all the draughts of fresh air that blew, the power of the reactionaries was broken. More and more members of the community took up the new ideas. In vain did the Chief Rabbi raise a warning voice against the change. He reaped only mockery and derision, and even the Council had to take his part. The craving for culture could no longer be repressed. It first found satisfaction in the formation of reading circles, the members of which wished to enlarge their field of knowledge and penetrate more deeply into modern culture by means of reading and discussion. In the years 1801 to 1803 three such societies were started. Since the ghetto lay in ruins, it afforded no place for such meetings, and the Council graciously allowed them to rent places in the city, but they were not free to choose their reading material. Their books and newspapers were to be submitted to the city censorship. In 1804 a fourth literary society was established with far-

reaching aims, including humanitarian projects, such as paying to send poor gifted boys to what was called the model school, founded by the city in 1803, and based on modern ideas. When it was opened, no fewer than twenty-two Jewish pupils, one-fourth of the whole number, entered. In the years from 1800 to 1803 twenty-nine Jewish students also entered the *Gymnasium*, and at that time there were thirteen Jewish boys of Frankfort in the Jacobson school in Seesen. The need of a school of their own became more and more obvious. One was started in 1805. On December 10 of this year the Council allowed "the Jewish Philanthropin for poor and orphan children" to lease a place for a school in the city. The permission had not been given readily, but only after much cavilling and dispute. This little school was the nucleus of the *Realschule* of the Jewish community of Frankfort, which still prospers and which has sent forth many able men and women who have made a good name for themselves in the world.

The concessions made by the Council in the realm of education show that it could not guard itself completely from the influence of the spirit of the times. Besides, some impression had been made by the fact that, when the city was having difficult times, the Jews had been loyal and although themselves impoverished had advanced their money without interest for the payment of the war levy. Upon close investigation the suspicion arises that the alteration of opinion is due less to an inner change than to pressure from without. The Council was not master in its own house. It depended on the rulers in Paris,

whose armies had in a short space of time occupied the city twice. Even after peace had been concluded the French still considered themselves the masters of the left bank of the Rhine, and so dwelt in close proximity to Frankfort. The commandant of Mayence, General Hatry, grew very angry when the Jews of Mayence and other places on the left bank, having gone to Frankfort on the market boat on a Sunday before the end of the church services, had not been admitted to the city, although they wore French cockades on their hats and were naturalized French citizens. Indignant he told the Council that he could not tolerate any distinction between French citizens of one faith and another, and the dwellers on the left bank of the Rhine were French citizens. He also demanded the removal during the fairs of all restrictions of trade upon the Jews of Mayence. The Council not only yielded to this demand, but forced by existing conditions, it decreed a number of other regulations which at last effected a breach in the old masonry of the Stättigkeit. The citizens' boards, the most reactionary group of all, were angered by the innovations. They were chiefly incensed because the old Jewish wall which everywhere showed rifts and breaches had on account of its dilapidation been broken off at a height of three to five feet below the top. In all seriousness they asked that the municipal architects be penalized "for this disgusting plan which had been concocted," and be required to rebuild the walls to their former height of thirty feet.

The municipal government had more important matters to claim its attention than a pile of stones.

Its eyes were turned to Regensburg, where Imperial deputies had gathered to consider the new state of affairs in Germany. All the estates of the Empire had sent representatives to Regensburg to guard their interests. The deputies of the city of Frankfort were two of her most important personages, the banker Simon Moritz von Bethmann and the Chancellor Böhmer. The Jews of Germany too were roused to political activity. A Jewish advocate from Alsace, Michel Beer, sent an appeal to all the princes and peoples of Europe and asked all states, especially the German states, to grant justice to his coreligionists and, following the example set by France, put them as citizens on a level with the Christians. In Regensburg a German lawyer, Christoph Grund, presented a memorial which, in spirited, impressive style, depicted the condition of the Jews in the countries of Germany. As a "depressing example" of the burden of the restrictions that made their existence "a sad gift of nature," Grund mentions the Frankfort Stättigkeit of 1616. He asked that the rights of citizens, even if in limited measure, be granted the Jews of Germany, as the only way of merging them with the German people and levelling religious inequalities. In Vienna, where everything "that smacked of revolution" was hated, there was great indignation over this paper. But the attitude there did not check the steady progress of the struggle for Jewish emancipation. The Jews on the left bank of the Rhine were seen to be in full possession of civil rights as were the Jews in the new Republic of Batavia (the Netherlands) with whom there had long

been close relations. Strenuous efforts on behalf of the Jews of Frankfort had recently been made at the Congress of Rastadt. In the French press voices were raised for their emancipation bitterly attacking the city Council.

To the Frankfort community it did not seem worthy that it should remain inactive and owe the improvement of its status entirely to others. It began now to put its hand untiringly to the task. Late in the fall of 1802 it sent three of its most prominent and distinguished members to Regensburg, in order to present its wishes to the estates of the realm and to the deputies of foreign powers there assembled. One of these three was Baruch, the father of Ludwig Börne. They requested the abrogation of the body-tax, of the Stättigkeit and of its restrictions on trade, and asked for the right to live and acquire houses in any part of the city. According to assertions of Bethmann and Böhmer, their description of ghetto conditions made an especially strong impression on the deputies of France and Russia. But the representatives of Austria, Prussia, and Hesse-Cassel also took a lively interest in the fate of the Frankfort Jews. A great diplomatic ado was raised against the old Imperial city, and a mass of newspaper articles appeared against it. Bethmann and Böhmer saw clouds gathering over the city from all sides. Thanks to their skill and adroitness the storm did not break. Holding out to the Jewish representatives promises of far-reaching concessions by the Council, Böhmer induced them to take no further steps, while Bethmann successfully explained to the diplomats of the

various states that had intervened on behalf of the Jews that if the Jews were granted the rights they desired the citizens of Frankfort would be ruined for lack of economic opportunity. The strong impression made by his oratoric gifts showed in the growing coolness of the treatment accorded the representatives of the Jewish community of Frankfort. They were finally referred to their legal authorities.

Having been so fortunate as to prevent the intervention of foreign powers in the politics of Frankfort —and this was his whole aim—Bethmann advised the Council to yield to the demands of the Jews. Sensitive to the change of weather, the latter had diminished their demands considerably, but the Council was unwilling to grant even the reduced demands straightway. It was inclined to allow only the removal of the high wall, the widening of the street, and the building of houses with less fire hazard. Since the quarter could then shelter a smaller number of inhabitants, it was ready graciously to permit Jewish families to live in a few streets adjacent to the ghetto. The citizens' boards were outraged. They thought that enough would be conceded to the spirit of the times if the wall were to be only sixteen to eighteen feet high and the old height of thirty feet were to be indicated by iron rails. That would keep the Jews from complaining of lack of light and air. But in the ghetto they must remain. To the credit of the citizens of Frankfort it may be said that not all thought as did the members of the boards supposed to be their representatives. The citizens who lived on the street close to the Jew-

ish quarter, the Allerheiligenstrasse, were most blunt in their opposition. They thought worthy of imitation the example set by the people of Bonn, who had recently astounded the world by breaking down the gates of the ghetto with axes and fetching out the rejoicing Jews with festive pomp. They declared in a petition to the Council that they did not wish one foot of the wall, "that symbol of captivity, that monument of antiquated intolerance," to remain standing.

Had the Council really been inclined to make concessions in regard to the dwelling question, it would then have found support in one group of the citizens. Far more difficult was it to satisfy the Jews by freeing them from those fetters of the Stättigkeit which crippled their business activities. Here the Council felt it could not go ahead independently, for Vienna kept a jealous eye on the little remnant of power left to the head of the Empire. In the business circles of Frankfort, from which the boards of citizens were mainly recruited, it was known that Francis II was absolutely unfavorable to all attempts whatsoever to emancipate the Jews. Therefore great hopes were placed in the Emperor's decision. The Jews themselves appeared before him. Although they knew how little good feeling Francis II had for them, they nevertheless tried again in the year 1803 to appeal to his humanity. There was at first apparently no response. The Council also hesitated to tell them what position it took with respect to their demands. The year 1804 was well begun, the spring fair was at hand, and no one knew how the Council would settle

even the question of freedom during the fair. Finally, on April 5, a provisional decree, as it was called, was issued. It brought the greatest disillusionment to the Jews. Not one of the promises made them by Bethmann and Böhmer was fulfilled. The only concession was the enlargement of the Jewish quarter. Otherwise the old policy of restrictions, prohibitions, and petty vexations was maintained. There were certain streets in which they were forbidden to rent shops and stores. In others where they might do so, they were forbidden to put up signs or stalls for the display of wares, etc.

After they had been thus disappointed by the Council, the Jews set their hopes upon the answer from Vienna, which did not come till April 1805. It caused great agitation, for Vienna had had no thought of lending a willing ear to their just complaints. On the contrary, the Imperial rescript administered a sharp rebuke to the Council because it had quietly put up with breaches of the Stättigkeit, and so had given due occasion for dissatisfaction in the Christian trading class. It warned the Council in the future to refrain from making any enactment on its own initiative, and to safeguard the provisions of the Stättigkeit more effectually. In regard to this, it asked an early report on what measures the Council expected to take, especially during the time of the fair.

But the Aulic Council of the Empire was spared further concern with such matters. August 6, 1806, Francis II resigned the Imperial crown. Thus the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation, the Aulic

Council of the Empire, and the status of the Jews as serfs of the chamber, all ceased to exist. The Jews of Frankfort did not remain long in uncertainty as to their fate. With the destiny of the Empire was settled that of the old Imperial city, which lost its independence. By Napoleon's grace it was made capital of a new state, a primacy, one of the members of the Confederation of the Rhine, and became the residence of the Prince Primate Karl von Dalberg. On September 9 the city was ceremoniously entrusted to his commissioners, and on September 15 he himself made his entry into Frankfort.

CHAPTER XI

STRUGGLE FOR EMANCIPATION UNDER DALBERG

THE new master of Frankfort was preceded by a good reputation. The opinion prevailed that if there must be a prince, Karl von Dalberg was the best prince possible. He was a man of benevolent disposition, stood at the peak of the culture of his day, and was acquainted with the most important men of intellect in Germany. He was not "patriotic" or "national" in the modern sense of those words. He had implicit faith in his idol Napoleon. The Jews also, in fact particularly the Jews, were satisfied with Dalberg's election. It was known that in spite of his high ecclesiastical office he was a man of great religious tolerance, and he had given evidence of his sympathy with the Jews. When he entered Frankfort, the whole of Jewry was in a state of excitement and expectancy, for Napoleon was energetically taking hold of the Jewish problem with the hope of possibly solving it in all civilized lands. Though the Constituent National Assembly in Paris in 1791 had in principle granted the Jews of France full political and civil equality, yet a strong reaction had soon made itself felt, which under the cloak of charges of all sorts, especially of usury, threatened to take away, or at least to limit, the rights just acquired. The spokesmen of this tendency had for a while won influence over Napoleon. However, he decided to

call an Assembly of Jewish Notables, who should make suggestions in regard to suitable means for the regeneration of the Jewish people, especially "for the revival of their moral sense, deadened among them in great part by their degradation."

At the end of July, 1806, the Notables met in Paris. Twelve questions were laid before them. Among them were the following: whether French Jews felt loyalty for France, which question involved that of the relation of Jews generally to the land of their birth; whether mixed marriages of Christians and Jews were permitted, and, most important of all, how the Jewish religion regarded usury. The Assembly was conducted with dignity and performed its task to Napoleon's entire satisfaction. His next desire was to create a center for the Jews of all civilized lands by resuscitating the Grand Sanhedrin, the chief official religious organ of the Jews of the time of the Second Temple. On October 6, 1806, the Assembly of Notables issued a call to all Jewry to acquaint them with Napoleon's plan and urge them to send deputies to Paris. This appeal awoke a strong echo in the Frankfort community, which promptly declared its readiness to send representatives to the Sanhedrin, dispatched an address of respect to Napoleon, and elected as deputies to Paris two members of the community distinguished for their talmudic scholarship, Salomon Trier and I. Hildesheim. The Grand Sanhedrin was opened February, 1807. We have only meager accounts of the activity of the men from Frankfort. Trier seems to have been rather inactive, but Hildesheim partici-

pated in the discussions with zeal. Even though the outcome of the Sanhedrin did not correspond to the general expectations, yet its moral influence was great. The self-respect of the Jews was increased not a little by the consciousness that the most powerful ruler of the age, despite the multiplicity of tasks devolving upon him, had enough interest and found enough time to devote himself to the Jewish question. As he had announced May 30, 1806, he wanted to train the Jews in civic morality and give them a fatherland so that they should become members of the society in which they lived. Particularly the Jewish communities of Germany, subjected to so much oppression, were mightily encouraged in their sense of human rights and human dignity, and strengthened in their determination to defend their rights against all future encroachments to the uttermost.

The Jews of Frankfort at all events felt no need to fear Karl von Dalberg's attitude. On the contrary, they placed exaggerated hopes in him, for he had recently expressed approval of speeches in favor of equality for the Jews made by its chief spokesman in the French National Assembly. One of the first acts of the Prince Primate was well calculated to strengthen their hopes. By a decree of September 28, 1806, he granted the Jews the right to enter the public parks, a privilege which they had surely sought long enough. And no harm at all came of it. Not the least opposition was raised by the citizens, even though, as the scoffer Börne maintained, "the orthodox opinion of many a patrician was thereby threat-

ened with shipwreck." Was this decree the herald of greater things? Apparently not at first, for an ordinance concerning the provisional organization of the new state reserved all offices for adherents of the Christian confessions and accorded the "members of the Jewish nation" only protection against "insult and libellous abuse." The Jews then realized that it was no time to sit idly by with hands folded. They handed to the Prince a brochure entitled, "Description of the Condition of the Jews of Frankfort," in which they expressed their wishes and hopes in impassioned language, and showed how degraded their situation was as compared with that of all other German Jews. They asked in the first place for civil rights, freedom to acquire land, to pursue whatever business they wished, and so on. There can be no doubt, judging by Dalberg's views and convictions, that he considered the grievances and complaints of the Jews justified, but he was temperamentally unable to carry through by will power what he held to be right. Wherever he met resistance he quickly weakened. Since he had conceded a certain influence in the government to the Senate and to the citizens' committee, and since these bodies neither would nor could overcome all at once the centuries-old prejudices from which even a Goethe could not free himself, it was clear that the Jews had a long thorny way to travel before they received equal civil rights. It was a severe blow to them that the Prince made civil rights dependent on a "unanimous vote of the citizens," which according to their view was a circumlocution for "never."

Dalberg tried to soothe them at the outset with petty concessions. He gave the Jewish school called "Philanthropin" a sum of money which he promised to make an annual donation. When the Jewish representatives took the oath of allegiance to him, he received them most graciously and promised that he would shortly accept a petition from them with proposals for the improvement of their situation. It was not long before this petition was prepared. It recounted the "peculiarities and absurdities" which made a mock of all dignity and humanity. Their chief grievance was the form of the Jewish oath in court. When Dalberg called attention to it, even the Senate had to concede that the form of the oath was "partly unsuitable, partly obsolete," and it proposed a milder form, which however was not to be revealed to the Jews until after its adoption "so that they should not be able to comment on it." The oath had hitherto run as follows: ". . . Whenever I may swear falsely, or deceitfully, may I be deprived of all the grace of the Eternal Lord and may there be imposed on me all the punishments and curses which God has imposed on the *accursed* Jews, etc." The last passage was to be changed to read thus: ". . . which God imposed on the Jews who rebelled against Him during their wanderings in the desert and who were therefore accursed."

In the meanwhile the date approached on which it was the annual custom to read the Stättigkeit in the synagogue. Only the year before the ceremony had passed without any objection on the part of the Jews. This year, however, on the score that times had

changed completely, they questioned the validity of the Stättigkeit altogether. The State Councillor von Eberstein, who cherished a certain amount of good will for the Jews, was inclined to omit at least the public reading of the Stättigkeit, but Dalberg suddenly began to play the rôle of champion of historic tradition, and as constitutional successor to the Emperor he became unwilling to relinquish either the Stättigkeit or the rite of reading it publicly. He was, to be sure, of the opinion that in the form dating back to 1616 it was antiquated and should be replaced by a modern one conforming to the spirit of the age. Baron von Eberstein was commissioned to work out a new form. He was the readier to undertake the task because, as he wrote to the Prince, he had previously wished "to help this debased nation to rise . . . and alleviate their condition here, for it is in many respects undeniably oppressive." It did not, however, occur to him to seek the coöperation of those to whom the matter was of the deepest concern, and learn what the views and wishes of the Jews themselves were.

The Jews had evidently expected something of the sort. Eberstein learned that they had elected a committee "of fairly well educated gentlemen" who might be consulted as to how far and in what direction the expectations of the community went. It had also come to his ears that this committee was engaged in the composition of a memorial, which was, in fact, soon placed in his hands, and which shows how greatly the expectations and hopes of the Jews had been toned down since 1806. They no longer asked

full equality of rights with the citizens. They admitted that in a city like Frankfort to grant 500 families full share in the government might not be wholly in accord with the public weal. . . But if no beginning were made all hope would vanish of blending the Jewish and Christian elements of the city into a harmonious whole. All they asked of Dalberg was a declaration that the religion of their fathers should in the future be no bar to the complete acceptance of the Jews in the commonwealth. Proposals leading to the desired goal were made in detail, and were briefly as follows: Cessation of segregation in special districts, increased opportunities for gaining a livelihood by trade, and, finally, permission not only to build factories, which had been granted at an earlier date, but also to learn trades despite the objections of the guilds. "It depends only on the Prince," the paper concluded, "whether we shall in the future be oppressed, unhappy, suffering men, or cheerful, loving, devoted subjects."

Eberstein set about drawing up the new Jewish ordinance. To aid him in the difficult task he selected three Frankfort notables whom he credited with extremely liberal ideas and who possessed a thorough knowledge of the city constitution. The Councillor of Finance Steitz was secretly included. His name was not to be given out publicly because he was known to be an outspoken enemy of the Jews. The commission received, but of course did not heed, suggestions from the general public. The reader will find some of the contents of a communication which met with the approval of Dalberg himself rather

amusing. It lays all the blame for the backward condition of the Jews on their rabbis, whom it wholly and utterly condemns, but it allows the Jews many good traits. It praises their cleanliness, and even more their frankness and uprightness and lack of servility. "Hypocrisy, smooth words, and compliments are not yet fashionable among them; the poorer ones here do not evince crawling subservience toward the rich as they unfortunately do in Berlin; indeed they are often rather loud in their opposition to their wealthy brethren when a matter of importance to the nation is under discussion." The writer of this document defends the Jews against the charge oftenest made, that of practising usury. Not that it was entirely absent among the Frankfort Jews, but they themselves so hate and despise it that only a few members of the community practise it. In the spirit of Dalberg the writer of the document recommends, as the most effectual way to elevate the Jews, the establishment of good schools after the pattern of the Philanthropin, which he maintained the government ought to help as much as possible.

Eberstein's co-workers did not have half so benevolent an attitude as the author of this plea, and so the baron's dreams were not fulfilled. The commission made short work of its task. On July 22, 1807, the Prince received the new draft. He signed it on November 30 with a conscience not entirely at ease. He was right in thinking "that many a Jew who was clear-thinking, upright, and versed in European culture" would feel himself sorely offended by this Stättigkeit, but he was of the opinion "that preju-

dices are hard to combat; nothing must be overthrown violently," and so forth. From Paris he appointed the Chief of Police Itzstein as special commissioner for the regulation of Jewish affairs. On January 4, 1808, deputies chosen by the Jews for the purpose were summoned to appear in the home of the Syndic Seeger. After a few introductory remarks, Seeger rose to read the new Stättigkeit, appending necessary explanations. The Jews, somewhat intimidated, raised no objections at the moment, and at their request the trustees were given a copy of the Stättigkeit. The contents, as they wrote, "filled them with deep grief and sorrow," but they did not give up all hope of changes. They planned to send a deputation to the Prince, still in Paris, and begged the commission not to publish the Stättigkeit till an answer had come from him. It is curious that the petition presented to the Prince on February 15 was signed by only half the members of the community, a fact used by Dalberg to justify his negative reply. Nothing now stood in the way of publishing the document.

The first part of the Stättigkeit prescribed exact rules in regard to public worship. No doubt they were well-intentioned, but they gave great offense, for the Jews had hitherto, as has been mentioned, had complete autonomy in the sphere of religion and religious instruction. There were now prescriptions for the training of their rabbis, who were to be installed in office by the Prince only after passing an examination before the Lutheran Consistory. Their powers were defined, and compared with what they

had had were greatly circumscribed, both in connection with marriages and every sort of ecclesiastic and civil jurisdiction. The synagogue service, which had been conducted according to the ancient forms hallowed by tradition, untouched by the modern spirit, was reformed by compulsion. There was even a rule that circumcisions might not be performed without giving due notice.

The second section dealt with education and schools, and it must be said offered a decided improvement over existing conditions. The whole Jewish school system was placed under the supervision of the board of school commissioners, and was managed like that of the Christians. A vocational and industrial school and gymnastics, especially for boys, were to be provided. To orthodox Jews this regulation of schooling may have seemed as great a hardship as interference with synagogue affairs, though it was indubitably well-intentioned. This can scarcely be said of the rule that no Jewish head of a family might choose a tutor for his children himself, but might employ only one who had passed an examination before the board of commissioners. He was likewise forbidden to send his children to schools elsewhere. To lend weight to the school regulations it was provided that in future no one should be given a marriage license who could not prove that he had attended school regularly and made satisfactory progress.

The third section, dealing with the organization of the community, gave evidence of an entirely reactionary point of view. The mediaeval distinctions

of different classes of Jews—those enjoying a Stättigkeit, protected Jews, and alien Jews—were retained. The maximum number of Jews holding a Stättigkeit was fixed at five hundred families. To keep the number of families within the maximum allowed, marriage was made difficult and might even be temporarily forbidden. Without reckoning in the large number of merchants' clerks, students, and servants, the community at the time consisted of four hundred and forty-seven families, averaging possibly five members, so that there was a margin for fifty-three marriages before the permitted number of five hundred households was reached.

The fourth section dealt with the place of dwelling and with business and trades. Not the remotest idea was entertained of allowing the Jews the right to live in any part of the city. On the contrary, the ghetto, still lying in ruins, was to be rebuilt, though in more spacious and sanitary fashion. The Jews were to be allowed to live in certain adjacent streets and there were no longer to be walls and gates. In regard to the shops and stores within the city proper, about which there had been so much dispute, no changes were made in the existing ordinances. On the other hand there was a break with the past, particularly with the old guild regulations, in the rule that henceforth Jewish boys must be accepted as artisans' apprentices and would be entitled at the end of their period of apprenticeship to a regular indenture paper. Factories might be run by Jews, but only if the workers employed were Jews. The same sort of restrictions robbed the permission to lease lands of its value.

The condition that only Jewish day-laborers might be employed could not be fulfilled. Trade bore the same restrictions as formerly. It was altogether forbidden in certain wares, such as weapons, coins, furniture and clothing manufactured abroad, forage, wood for fuel, colonial produce and groceries, wine, and fruit.

The laws concerning that "base trade" usury, dating from the beginning of the seventeenth century, remained in force without change.

The last was the crowning section of the document. It dealt with the behavior of the Jews toward the Christian population, and contained only stringent injunctions to the former, how they were to conduct themselves when making a purchase at market and so on.

Our brief résumé of the contents of this wretched document will enable the reader to understand the dissatisfaction it caused, particularly as other states were much more liberal in their legislation in regard to the Jews. There was one rule of the Stättigkeit that was of very great advantage to the Jews. Up to this time they had had no surnames, but it had been the custom to call them by the names of their houses or of the places from which they came. They were now obliged once for all to adopt family names, which they were allowed to choose for themselves, but which were to be passed on from father to son, and with which every contract, in fact every official and business document, was to be signed. Through this new regulation the later acceptance of Jews as full citizens was considerably facilitated.

The next step to be taken was the election of the board of the community prescribed by the Stättigkeit. A list was laid before Dalberg from which he selected twelve men, who could not refuse election. But the men chosen resisted and pursued a policy of passive obstruction. They did not wish to lend their names to the new order which they regarded as disgraceful. As excuse they pleaded age, illness, etc., and held out to the uttermost. But nothing availed. The threat that in case they continued to refuse to serve, Christians paid at their expense would be put in office as a provisional board made them submissive, and they took the oath under the new constitution. The Chief of Police Itzstein presided at the sessions of the board. He insisted on the strict order of business and its systematic arrangement, and we may quietly concede that this was beneficial to the Jews. The work was organized, and a special department formed for each branch of administration. The communal organization, which had fallen into complete disorder, was restored, and the collection of taxes placed on a new basis. Considerable attention was given to the school system, which was the branch of administration in which the Prince Primate took the greatest personal interest. His favor was wholly bestowed on the Philanthropin, which received annual money subventions from his pocket. For the most important pursuits of the community, trades and commerce, there was no department, for the hands of the board were tied by the terms of the Stättigkeit.

The work planned for the members of the board at their sessions and the orders they received from the

representatives of the government present were highly productive of results. The members became used to the tried customary forms for the transaction of business and administration. By the training received in those years the Jews were enabled to guide their own destinies later on when the leading strings were dropped.

One important problem remained unsolved, the question of the new Jewish quarter, on which Dalberg insisted. To no less a personage than the Mayor Guiollette did he entrust the plans. Guiollette, a Frenchman, later mayor of Frankfort, earned the gratitude of the city for his parking of the fine promenades that took the place of the fortifications when the latter were razed. He was interested, and soon delivered plans and sketches to the Prince. He also wisely planned a method for financing the building operations by a sort of joint-stock company, based on very favorable terms, and for selling the lots by auction and indemnifying the former owners. But no purchasers appeared for the stocks, and when lot No. 1, the ground on which later the Rothschilds' banking house was built, was offered at auction there were no bidders. An attempt was made to stimulate the unwilling Jews by admitting Christians also as purchasers, but this did not frighten the Jews. The lots of ground finally found landlords, because it was thought unwise to make Dalberg angry, but nothing further took place for a while. The Jews continued to live wherever they had leased places, perhaps preferring uncomfortable dwellings to the finest modern residences in a ghetto. When in 1808 a fire again

destroyed some houses in the part of the ghetto that was still inhabited, the tenants refused to rebuild them.

The city and the Jews had hardly begun to grow accustomed to the new order when profound political changes again took place. The Vienna treaty in 1809, which ended the hapless campaign of Austria against Napoleon, essentially altered the map of the states of southern and western Germany. The Primacy was changed into the Grand Duchy of Frankfort with greatly enlarged borders. Dalberg signed the compact in Paris on February 10, 1810. The result was a complete break with the past. A plan of centralization after the French pattern was followed, and the country was presented with prefects, city councillors, mayors, etc. The Grand Duchy of Frankfort was divided into four departments, of which one was the City of Frankfort.

It was now incumbent upon the Grand Duke to show whether he wished to modernize his state only in externals, or whether he was interested in putting fresh contents into the old vessel. The intolerable situation of the Jews, either despite or because of the new Stättigkeit, was such as to force him out of his passive attitude into taking a definite stand. But Dalberg's undecided temperament made matters particularly difficult. Sometimes the government closed its eyes and ignored the terms of the Stättigkeit. No stress was laid on the exact limitation of marriages and no one bothered to forbid the Jews living in the city.

Meanwhile the constitution of the new Grand Duchy was adopted and the so-called Patent of

Organization published. Articles 11 to 13 were of great significance. They announced the equality of all residents in the district, the abolition of serfdom, and of the former special privileges of individual estates and provinces, as well as freedom of worship for the various religious confessions. Thus the equality of the Jews with the Christian population was decided in principle, but it almost seemed as if the Grand Duke began to be afraid of his own courage, for the new constitution was not put into effect promptly after its publication. Two months passed before Dalberg spoke on the Jewish situation in the session of the state Senate and stressed the need of establishing fixed principles for the civil and political rights of the Jews. He then trod the path so often followed in the earlier days by the Council when it wished to procrastinate action on necessary measures. He requested various expert opinions and asked them of the very men of whom we have heard, Baron von Eberstein, the Syndic Seeger, and a lawyer named Thomas from Fulda. As the three men had very divergent views in politics, they had different opinions to offer on this particular matter, and were unable to come to an agreement in the formulation of a plan. Finally, on January 19, 1811, the state Senate came to a decision. A speech by Eberstein, in which he pleaded warmly on behalf of the Jews, made a profound impression on all the members, and when the votes were cast, his proposals secured the majority. The Senate laid before the Grand Duke a number of guiding principles for his approval, of which the first was that the difference between former citizens,

mere denizens, and Jews in regard to citizenship had ceased. Nevertheless the redemption of the Jews from the exceptional status from which they had suffered for hundreds of years, their naturalization, was not to be laid in their lap as a free gift. It was reduced to a business transaction. Just as in former times they had had to pay cold cash to the various Emperors for their franchises and privileges, so now they had to purchase the great boon of freedom for which they yearned. Eberstein, with all his benevolence, was a good enough business man to see it as particularly inconvenient that the 22,000 florins of license money paid annually by the Jews in lieu of certain unjust taxes abolished since the Primacy, should be lost to the empty treasury of the Grand Duke. He therefore hit upon the idea of capitalizing this sum of 22,000 florins to a fortyfold amount. The prospect of receiving a sum of 880,000 florins fascinated the Grand Duke. Still after several days, he was minded, fairly enough, to reduce it to half the amount, of which 200,000 florins were to be paid at once into the Grand Ducal treasury and the remainder in instalments with 5 per cent interest.

It did not occur to the Jewish community to think it immoral or even degrading that what should long ago have been theirs as a gift of God or as a matter of justice should be offered to them as an object of barter. They were fully satisfied with the settlement, though they said the price was too high. Their next preoccupation was to raise the money. Among the members of the community who had been involved in the transaction with the Grand Ducal government

over the financial arrangements, we find Mayer Amschel Rothschild, head of the banking house, which even then was in flourishing condition, and Isaac Ellissen, whose name is still part of the well-known firm name of Speyer-Ellissen. The payment of the redemption money dragged on. It was still incomplete toward the end of 1811. The Grand Duke was eager for as rapid a termination to the business as possible, for just at this time he was in great need of money. So the government compromised, reduced the sum to be paid at once to 150,000 florins, and granted a delay for the payment of the rest without interest, but notified the Jews that the whole business would be broken off if the 150,000 florins were not paid before the end of 1811. The threat bore fruit. A committee of the community at once signed the protocol and the payment to the treasury was made soon thereafter.

The Frankfort Jews had now reached their goal. On December 28, 1811, there appeared in the government paper the ordinance which declared that, inasmuch as the Jews had paid off the taxes that had up to this time been due from them—it must be understood only on this account—they had entered upon the actual enjoyment of the equality of rights decreed in the Patent of Organization. "Henceforth the Israelitish dwellers in the city of Frankfort are to enjoy the same rights and powers as the Christian citizens, . . the Israelitish citizens are to have the right to the same treatment by all court and administrative officers as the rest of the citizens." All Jews and Jewesses took the oath of citizenship before

Mayor Guiollette. The ghetto ceased to exist. Though the marks left by the segregation and humiliation of hundreds of years could not be erased by one stroke of the pen, yet in the course of decades they grew fainter. Strange to say, former dwellers in the ghetto could not make up their minds to leave the place in which they were no longer forced to remain. The Jews began to settle in the city proper only gradually. For a long while they preferred the streets nearest the ghetto. In 1812 they secured only two houses outside of this district; in 1813, only one; in 1814, seven; in 1815, two.

After the Grand Duke had decided to grant equality to the Jews, he insisted on making them eligible for all public posts and offices of honor. That he selected Mayer Amschel Rothschild for his court banker does not indicate much of a break with the past, for Jewish court bankers had existed in the Middle Ages. It is more significant that, alongside the scions of the old patrician families on the College of Electors of the Departments of Frankfort, he appointed the same Mayer Amschel Rothschild, and after his death Joseph Oppenheimer, a physician he held in esteem. In the same year he appointed to the position of clerk in the police bureau Ludwig Baruch, distinguished as Ludwig Börne, the son of the prominent member of the community, Jacob Baruch. Citizens of the old families must in their innermost being have felt great indignation that persons, a short while ago so far beneath them, belonging to a despised class, should now be treated as their equals, and have entrée to the highest honors; but they clenched

their fists in their pockets, and let this politico-social revolution pass without protest. The Jews therefore could easily lull themselves into a deceptive sense of security and believe that all dislike, all hate of them had been buried. When the Grand Duke insisted that Joseph Oppenheimer, of whom mention has just been made, should be one of the five candidates in the election for the new municipal councillors, a certain opposition manifested itself, but in an ingeniously legalistic fashion, since there could be no possible objection to Oppenheimer on personal grounds and since constitutionally religion could not be a bar. Dalberg, however, refused to grant the validity of the objection, and his protégé was permitted to adorn himself with the white and red sash of the city senators. Later, upon his appointment to the post of Councillor for High Schools on the board of education, he became active in the direction of the school system of the city.

We might end the history of the Jews of Frankfort on this happy note if there were not a sad sequel to be recorded. The Jews enjoyed their new rights only a short while. The battle of Leipsic caused the downfall of Dalberg's throne. The Grand Duchy fell into its component parts, and Frankfort regained its independence as an Imperial city. The anti-Jewish elements held in check under Dalberg now again got the upper hand. They were gathered from various groups of Christian merchants and artisans, who thought themselves injured by the Jews' increasing range of business activity, and patricians whose pride could not brook sharing the precious privileges of

Frankfort citizenship with people barely out of the ghetto. In addition, there were those who could not overcome their prejudices against the religion and morals of the Jews. It is therefore clear why the first wish with which the majority of the citizens besieged the victorious allied forces was "Restrict the rights granted to the Jews!" Since the new official body, the Senate, completely shared this reactionary attitude, there remained nothing for the Jews to do but resort to the last means of preserving what they had won. They took their grievances to the Vienna Congress and after its sessions ceased, to the German Diet meeting in Frankfort. The chancellors of Austria and Prussia recognized the justice of the Jews' cause, but their warnings as well as those of England and Russia rebounded from the set determination of the Senate to allow no interference with its domestic affairs. It passed some resolutions restricting the Jews in the exercise of their rights as citizens, which again erected a dividing wall between Jew and Christian. A commission, appointed by the Diet, to which some deputies from the Senate belonged, met for the kindly settlement of the question in dispute. Finally, on September 1, 1824, a new law was passed which regulated the future status of the Jews in regard to political and civil rights. In the most important respect the Jews had certainly triumphed for they did not again become dependents of the city, as had been thought desirable by some men even of liberal tendencies. Yet they continued to be designated as Israelitish citizens, and they again had to accept oppressive restrictions, such as the fixing of

the maximum number of marriages at fifteen in a year, the forbidding of certain branches of trade, etc. There was still much that had been gained which had to be won again.

The political tendencies of the next decades, reaction, revolution, renewed reaction, and finally the triumph of democracy, broke like tides upon the Jewish situation. Despite all attempts to hold them back, the Jews of Frankfort entered more and more into German life and became a vital element in the communal affairs of the city. When the last limitations disappeared in 1864, and all legislation peculiarly affecting the Jews was repealed, this act, restoring to the grandchildren what their grandparents had possessed fifty-two years before, merely gave outward legal form to what had become actuality in the life of the city.

CHAPTER XII

COMPLETE EMANCIPATION

PRACTICALLY a generation passed without any essential change in the outward condition of the life of the Frankfort Jews. They realized that they could not swim against the tide of the time and that they had to await hopefully what the future might bring forth. In the meanwhile they tried to adapt their lives to the newly created conditions. The Senatorial Commissioner Ihm was trying to encourage assimilation between Christians and Jews— to be sure very gradually. The proposal was made in the Senate, not without his coöperation, to set aside the restrictions upon marriage. But the suggestion came too soon. Only one-third of the legislators voted in its favor. A more propitious time had to be awaited.

The liberal portion of the Jewish community achieved one success in 1839, thanks to a step taken by the board of directors themselves. The latter perceived the growth of dissatisfaction with their administration and, to take the ground from under it, they asked the Senate, in a petition dated March 12, 1838, for a supplement to the constitution of the community. The Senate merely drew up a regulation (published March 8, 1839) of which it boasted "that it would have a suitable effect on the development of congregational affairs." The regulation left the Senatorial Commissioner (after Ihm's resignation Souchay succeeded him in office) as before with a

board composed of nine members and the same mode of election previously followed. A new feature was the creation of a committee elected by all the members of the community, also composed of nine members. The board of directors was to hand over to this new committee an important part of their former rights. The duty of representing the community before the officials of the state, the supervision and administration of the income of the community, the taxes, the congregation, and the school system remained with the directors, but the committee became the body to which was entrusted the chief financial power. It had the sole authority to examine the estimates and the accounts of the community, and every request for a sum of money in excess of five hundred florins had to be approved by it.

Thus the community had secured control of a powerful administrative function and this concession restored calm at least in the sphere of internal politics. On the other hand, at this time the religious dissension that had split the community into two camps reached the stage of open breach. Adherents of traditional Judaism and opponents of the talmudic, rabbinic tendency engaged in controversy. The liberal elements for the most part originated in the Philanthropin, and to some extent in the first Jewish Freemasons' lodge, "Toward the Rising Dawn." The Philanthropin had become a communal school, and its teachers, especially Creizenach, were the leaders of the liberal party. In 1842 his adherents founded the "Society of the Friends of Reform," which refused to recognize the authority of the Talmud and

accepted that of the Bible with qualifications, stressing the idea that the Jewish religion was capable of continuous development. The various rabbinic conferences, as that at Frankfort in July, 1845, tried to bridge the ever-widening chasm between the followers of tradition and the "Friends of Reform." Finally, however, the orthodox Jews under the leadership of their rabbi Dr. Samson Raphael Hirsch, a gifted speaker and ingenious scholar, completed the break with the followers of the new tendency, and established an independent congregation with its own charter, called the "Religious Society of Israelites," which received recognition from the Senate.

The final breach was not completed till after the year of storm and stress, 1848, a year that brought other sorts of unrest and tumult to men's spirits. There had been violent ferment in Germany ever since the Paris revolution of July, 1830. The new political ideas gained ground in Frankfort as elsewhere, most of all among the Jews. Secret clubs and "circles" were formed in the city, as, for instance, "A Monday Circle," started in 1845, which included the most radical elements and in which two Jews, the lawyer Reinganum and the physician Dr. Schwarzschild, soon played a leading part. The line separating Jews and Christians vanished more and more. Nevertheless the Senate, supported by the guilds, had enough power to resist the demands made in March by the progressives. In their platform the sixth article asked for civil equality without distinction of faith, "a complete revolution as conditions were in Frankfort." The Senate was courageous

enough to deny this demand, "because article six involved an amendment to the constitution, which might be passed only in coöperation with the whole body of citizens."

This denial was the very thing to throw the Jews of Frankfort into the arms of revolution, their only hope for the fulfilment of their wishes. Carried away by Riesser's speech on August 28, 1848, the Frankfort Parliament opposed every exceptional law and decided in paragraph six of the statutes that religion should neither condition nor limit the enjoyment of all civil rights. The Frankfort Senate adopted these statutes, and the Jews became full citizens in Frankfort at the beginning of the year 1849.

Their joy was brief. The wave of revolution ebbed. The session of the Frankfort Parliament ended. Everywhere reaction raised its head thirsting for revenge. It sought to annul all the gains of the revolution. Its onslaught overcame the statutes, which were repealed. Frankfort was asked to revise the new constitution of February 20, 1849, which had proclaimed the political equality of all the citizens of the state. The opponents of Jewish emancipation again, as after 1815, revived the fiction of a Christian state, and told tales of the danger of a Jewish state in Frankfort, and even of a Jewish deputy to the Federal Diet. The Senate was unwilling to defend the threatened rights of the Jews. Gladly yielding to the gentle pressure of the Diet, which had briskly followed the path of reaction, it repealed the constitution of February 20, 1849, and with it the equality of

the Jews. So they had to begin anew. Liberal ideas had been defeated, but liberals were not discouraged. Step by step they tried to regain lost ground. The democratic party though defeated soon raised its head again in Frankfort, and won more and more influence in the law-making assembly of the city. In the Senate itself freer views shyly won their way. On May 19, 1853, it laid before the legislative body an "organic law," which restored to the Jews their active and passive right to vote, but on the following significant terms: Not more than four Israelites might enter the legislative assembly, and they should not be eligible for any posts in the Senate, for representation of the citizens, for judges' positions, or for any offices that dealt with the administration of the property of Christians. This proposal, which indicated some advance, was accepted by the assembly, only eleven members, known for their ultra-reactionary attitude, voting against it. They tried unsuccessfully to overthrow the law, which they alleged was revolutionary in character, by complaining to the Federal Assembly. Upon Prussia's motion the complaint was denied. So the Jews were now half-complete citizens.

At the end of the fifties, a fresh spirit throughout Europe ended reaction. A violent windstorm dispersed the heavy mists under which the German citizen had until then slumbered. The Prince Regent of Prussia dissolved the reactionary ministry of Manteuffel and called men of moderate liberalism to the head of the government. In Frankfort a new era of hope and faith dawned, and the legislative assem-

bly represented the desire for reform. In November, 1860, it moved the abolition of the whole antiquated, ossified system of guilds. The motion was not adopted at once, but it was repeated, and the progressive party won more and more adherents. On October 14, 1863, the assembly enacted freedom for the trades. The Senate itself had recognized the signs of the times, and proposed the complete equality of the Jews. On September 16 the legislative assembly adopted the motion, and as deserves mention did so unanimously. So greatly had the times changed. The Jews now were finally merged with the mass of the population of the city. Their peculiar status was ended, as well as their peculiar aims and their peculiar history. From now on, they shared in the fate of their mother city, in joy and in sorrow, in a very different sense from formerly, for they were now inseparably bound up with her.

Two years later the troops of Prussia marched into Frankfort, and the city was incorporated into the Kingdom of Prussia. As a provincial city of Prussia she lost her political importance, but her prosperity was not destroyed. Under later conditions as part of the unified German Empire, the city of Frankfort continued to be a place famous for its wealth and industry. It is hardly necessary to say that the large Jewish community contributed its share, and that trade and culture flourished in the old city on the Main.

Since the Jews have been allowed complete freedom to move about, it has hardly been possible to speak of the old Jewish community. The number of

Jewish families that can trace their genealogy back to dwellers in Frankfort in the fifteenth century is small as compared with the recent additions. Even the newcomers have been able to adapt themselves to the spirit of the place. The Jewish community of Frankfort is aware of its obligations. It maintains not only its school and hospital but also a large number of welfare institutions of all sorts.

CHAPTER XIII

THE OLD CEMETERY

FEW architectural remains bear witness to the historic vicissitudes of the Jewish community of Frankfort. The most important is the old cemetery on the Börneplatz. There it lies, a quiet oasis, in the midst of the bustle of the city, close to two market-halls and near an open market-square, alive with activity on several days of the week. It is enclosed by a low wall, which suffices to keep out the careless visitor, but cannot keep out the city noises, the clanging of passing tram cars, the roar of motor trucks with horns that resound shrilly in the busy streets. And yet the moment the gate is opened to admit us, the workaday world that has just surged about us dies away. In this realm of the dead abide peace and rest. The present disappears; we live in the past of which the stones tell the story.

The cemetery is most beautiful when the fresh green and blossoms of spring grow about the ancient gravestones, but at no season does the real, the solemn charm of the hallowed spot elude the visitor.

The cemetery has been mentioned again and again in these pages, so intertwined is its history with that of the community. The special purpose of the present chapter is to give a connected account of its historic significance.

No one knows when the Jews began to use this portion of Frankfort as a place of burial. The first

mention of the cemetery in documents is in the year 1300, whereas the oldest stone in existence bears the date 1272. Since the supposition has been disproved that there had been another Jewish cemetery in Frankfort in the oldest Jewish quarter near the Cathedral, where the Jews had lived intermingled with the Christians in the early days, it is probable that the oldest gravestones have not been preserved.

Originally the site of the cemetery was outside the city walls in the open country, surrounded by bleaching fields. When the walls were extended, in the fourteenth century, it was included within the city limits. Although in the later Middle Ages the Jews were debarred from owning land, yet the ground of the cemetery was an exclusive hereditary possession of the Jewish community. This may be learned from a document of the year 1316. At that time the community was evidently in great distress, for it pledged "its *Schul* (synagogue), its synagogue yard, and its cemetery beyond the city and the houses that belong to the cemetery to the worthy man, the Frankfort citizen, Wigand von Kolnhusin and Kuntzelin, to his wife in marriage, and to their heirs" for a rather high sum, 600 pounds of hellers or 600 gold florins. In the year 1336 we learn that another citizen drew rent from the same property.

The Jewish massacre of the year 1349, as we have seen, brought a bloody end to the whole Frankfort community, and soon after, and despite the terrible event, Jews again settled in the city on the Main, and buried their dead in the old graveyard. Though it was legally the property of the Jewish community,

the Council did not hesitate to make certain dispositions concerning it. In return for a fixed tax, it granted other Jewish communities in the neighborhood the right to bury their dead in it, and it required the Frankfort Jews to be responsible for the punctual payment of the tax. The Jews complained, but to no avail. The Council insisted upon the payment of three florins for every interment, and made the rule more stringent by decreeing that "the Jews who study or board and die here should also pay three florins." On the other hand, in the year 1505, when an alien Jew died away from the city, the Council forbade his burial in the local cemetery under a penalty of ten florins.

When in 1462 the Jews were forced to leave their old homes and live in a segregated quarter, a ghetto, built for them by the city fathers, the place selected was perhaps purposely in the new city adjacent to the cemetery. The living now dwelt close to their dead. Indeed, the ground was no longer reserved exclusively for the dead. Soon a number of small houses were built upon it. One was doubtless the home of the gravedigger and the person who washed corpses. Poor Jews who could not find lodging elsewhere seem also to have lived in the cemetery now and then. At least, in the year 1507, there was talk of Ryle, a poor woman with four children, who had dwelt in a little house in the cemetery for thirty years, and who on account of her poverty was unable to have her leaky shingle roof repaired. In the year 1519 the Council again ventured to trespass on the property rights of the Jews, and had a powder-mill

built on the cemetery lot. The Jews long petitioned that the use of the powder-mill be discontinued and, instead, they be allowed to furnish "a little room for sick Jews" in it. Their request was granted in the year 1539.

Whenever the course of events in war threatened the city, strategic importance was acquired by the cemetery, which offered a great open place in the most exposed part of the new city, having a wall provided with bays for defense. The Council did not hesitate to exploit the situation. When in 1552 Frankfort was besieged by Moritz of Hesse and John of Mecklenburg, it disregarded the laments of the Jews over the desecration of their burial ground, and posted in it a squad of soldiers with cannon. When, however, the Jews were asked to sink the gravestones and level the ground so that it might be better utilized for military purposes, they absolutely refused, and it must have cost them a good round sum of money to get the Council to desist.

What importance the cemetery had for the community during the Fettmilch insurrection, has been told in connection with the account of that sad event. We know that on the night in August when gangs raged and robbed and looted in the Judengasse without restraint, women and children with hastily gathered household gear took refuge with the dead, and that when no defense and no rescue was any longer possible for the men of the community they followed thither. They clad themselves in their shrouds and prepared for the end with dignity. We know too what scenes were enacted the next day

when Fettmilch, full of scorn, recalled the Stättigkeit and forced the people in distress to flee across the Main.

Several decades pass without any word in regard to the cemetery. In 1640 it was the object of a curious private complaint. Next to the cemetery lay a large bleaching field belonging to an alderman Völker, which he leased to a master-glazier living near the Allerheiligentor. The lessee had been given the keys to the wicket in the city wall and also to the cemetery gate, so that he could more readily get to his plot of ground. It happened that according to old custom an ox grazed in the cemetery and evidently often became pretty troublesome to the worthy master-glazier on his way through. He asked the Council to order the Jews to get rid of the ox or lock it up so that he could walk through undisturbed. The Jews refused, and the case was decided in their favor.

At the end of the seventeenth century, for the sum of 9,000 florins, the Völker heirs sold the bleaching field to the Jewish community for an addition to the cemetery. The newly acquired plot was for a while continued in use as a bleaching place and as a wood yard. After the great fire of 1711 its fate was changed. A detailed account has been given of this conflagration, which within twenty-four hours reduced practically the whole quarter to ashes, and during the night of which the women and children, with the pitiful remnants of their possessions, sought refuge in the "good place." This time summer breezes did not fan them as in 1614, but the cold

blasts of a January night. One of the few houses not touched by the flames was the almshouse, which stood near the cemetery. Back of it and nearer the cemetery six small houses were built in place of the ghetto hospital destroyed by fire. They served mainly for sick Jews from out of town. A most instructive comparison might be made of those little houses and the magnificence of modern hospital buildings.

The communal bake-ovens had before the fire been located back of the synagogue. On account of the fire hazard they caused, they were to be rebuilt somewhere out of the way. Five in number, they were placed in the bleaching field with dwellings over them. In the same field later were built a fire station and a poultry slaughter house.

Of all these buildings only five are still in existence. When the city wall was demolished and the moats filled in at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the neighborhood changed entirely. New streets were laid out and spacious houses built. This new part of the city as far as the Main was long called the "new promenade." On the spot where formerly stood the bake-ovens now stands the stately Hospital of the Sick Fund for Jewish Men and Women. Next to it, on the former bleaching field, stands a large, well built school house with a spacious playground. It was built in 1845 for the Philanthropin, founded in 1804.

When in 1908 the Philanthropin moved to its new building on the Hebelstrasse, it sold the old one to the city, which uses it for a public school. On the

The Cemetery (Börneplatz)

west side of the hospital now stands a synagogue of which more will be told later.

From the sexton of this synagogue we get the key to the gate of the cemetery. We enter and from a little eminence view the realm of the dead. We catch sight of the gravestones, imbedded in the grass and overgrown with flowers and shrubbery. They are reddish in color, in part covered with moss, and in shape are narrow and oblong, at first glance one exactly like the other. We recognize instantly that it is a densely populated burial place, but we cannot appreciate that approximately 7,000 human beings have here found their last resting place. On the west side, on the little hill on which we are standing, the stones extend in broken ranks. Farther to the east they gather in massed array. There these guardians of old faithful memories stand, close together, leaning on one another, often not a hand's breadth of space between. Some incline right or left to the side, as if needing the support of a neighbor. Others, having been set without foundations, have sunk into the soft earth. Others lie flat on the ground. Exposed to the weather for hundreds of years, many have lost layer after layer of stone and have crumbled to pieces. Many have defied time and stand as erect as when first set. The grief once felt for those buried here is extinguished in the generation now alive. Seldom is a visitor admitted who comes because he wishes piously to lay a little stone on the grave of a relative, for the last burial took place in 1828. In 1829 the cemetery was closed. Though no ties of friendship or kinship unite us with those who rest here, yet we feel

some stir of emotion as we walk through this field of the dead.

Let us first examine the hillock on which we stand. We can tell that the ground has been artificially elevated. Layers of dead were buried one over the other. In the course of centuries space grew scanty, and one coffin was laid upon the other; but the stones were always raised so that the memory of the deceased should not be lost. That is why, where all the stones have been preserved, they stand so close together. The obvious comparison has been made that the dead Jews in Frankfort fared just as the living Jews fared there. No free space in the Jews' street; none in their cemetery. Just as the buildings were made higher and higher in order to gain room for the growing number of dwellers in the ghetto, so place had to be made for the dead by raising the ground. In the course of centuries this procedure was frequently followed.

Let us walk about a bit on the narrow little paths, scarcely recognizable as such, which run over the ridged ground. Let us go slowly and study the stones. Mention has been made of the fact that superficially they all look alike. The uniformity was intentional, for Jewish custom demands that in death no one should have precedence over another, that a showy monument should not indicate the wealthy man's pride of purse and boast of merits he perhaps did not possess. Close observation reveals differences. Practically all the stones are long, narrow slabs of red sandstone, rounded at the upper end, but in details they differ considerably. The charac-

ters used in all the inscriptions are the usual square Hebrew letters. The later ones were graven more deeply than those of earlier date, probably one reason why the older monuments are relatively best preserved. They did not afford the rain such deep gutters. In accordance with the command in Holy Scriptures, ornament and sculpture are rare, yet on various stones more is to be found than might be expected. The connoisseur can follow the alterations in style of ornament from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century without a gap. As has been said, the houses of the Jewish quarter had names, which passed over to the tenants as surnames, as, for example, in the case of Rothschild, Schwartzschild, etc. The signs used on these houses often appear in decorative bas-relief on the headstones of the persons who had occupied them during life. We note a funnel (*Trichter*), tongs (*Zange*), ostrich (*Strauss*), glove (*Handschuh*), ewer (*Kanne*), etc. The sign of the ewer appears again and again, for it not only represents a certain house-sign, but also indicates the grave of a Levite. Hands spread in blessing indicate the resting place of a priest, a *Cohen*. Opportunity for interesting reliefs was afforded by the names taken from animals; such as, Hirsch (stag), Ross (horse), Baer (bear), etc. We are astonished to find that the artists did not shrink from the representation of human beings, even the complete human figure occurring several times as in three or four representations of the Garden of Eden.

Far more fascinating than the pictorial adornment of the tombstones, which, when all is said, is of an

unpretentious nature, is a study of the inscriptions. What the survivors say in praise of the dead is characteristic of themselves; their thoughts about the repose of death and about immortality are expressed. Whoever takes the trouble to decipher the inscriptions is making a study of the history of culture. What do the Frankfort Jews say of their dead, and what do they wish for them beyond the grave? The name of the deceased, of "him who is at rest," is never mentioned without the addition, "Peace be upon him," or "May his memory be a blessing," or "May the memory of the righteous be a blessing." The inscriptions usually close with the formula: "May his soul be bound in the bond of life," or "May his soul be in the Garden of Eden. Amen. Selah," or "May his soul be bound in the bond of life with the other souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden. Amen. Selah." If a son is erecting a tombstone for his father or his mother, he always speaks with the greatest reverence of the parent as "my father, my master," or "my mother, my mistress, salvation be hers who bore her," and the like. Of women it will be said, "All her deeds were gracious," "she was as glorious as a queen in the chamber of the women," "she stretched out her hand to the poor," "she spoke to all gently and humbly," "she was worthy of honor, noble, lovely in her actions as a rose," "she was God-fearing in the house of her father from her youth up, she loved peace, guided her children on the path of righteousness." In other cases the inscription is more individual and more detailed. Thus, "She took pains to work for the

needs of her household, to honor her husband in his old age." Another inscription reports: "She applied all her energy to the training of her children for the Torah; she performed her business with faithfulness; great pain came to her in hours of sorrow; she bore all in love." These words bring before even an unimaginative person the picture of a true wife and mother, the guardian of her family, tireless in her industry and activity, but despite the worries of daily life always keeping her mind bent on eternal good and endeavoring to awaken the same love in her children. After this, how scanty is another inscription which can say nothing of her who lies in the grave but that she attended to the lighting of the synagogue.

In general the inscriptions on the graves of men have more individual coloring than those for women. True, in many cases there was little to be said. Of one the inscription says only that he honored his father and his mother, and of another that he belonged to the holy society for the care of the sick and the burial of the dead. Of a third it is reported: "He established our house of learning here." But some stones are eloquent with imperishable eulogies.

They tell about the prominent men of the community. Thus on one grave we read, "Here rests a man who was simple and straightforward. He departed from evil and did good. From youth up he despised the vanities of the world and its pleasures, and chose the good, and occupied himself with the Torah and with profane learning. He was wise and skilled in the law, was master of many languages and of worldly affairs. Even in his youth he set apart

stated times for the study of the Law. In his business he dealt faithfully. He had a pure heart to pray with devotion. He made gifts for charity, and practised deeds of mercy." Another inscription sings the praises of a man who must have been one of the most highly respected in the Jewish quarter. Of him it is said: "He walked blameless and practised righteousness; he was daily one of the first ten in the House of God; for thirty-three years he was a faithful shepherd of our congregation. He strove for truth and peace. He was among those who presented the gifts of our community to two Emperors." On another grave, that of a modest man, is inscribed: "Silence is praise of him, for he ordered before he died that no eulogy should be placed on his tombstone."

To illustrate the beautiful simplicity of the earliest inscriptions, we must not fail to record the words of the legend graven on the oldest stone: "I am erected as a pillar at the head of the respected Hanna, daughter of Rabbi Alexander, died ? Ab, in the year 5032. May her soul dwell in the Garden of Eden. Amen. Selah." A century later we still find this simple pithy style. On the grave of a famous rabbi of the year 1380: "Here in this bier lies hidden the perfection of beauty and immaculateness, who overcame poverty and distress by his gifts and ennobled his surroundings by his wisdom, the aged, wise Rabbi Simon, son of Rabbi Joel Halevi, died old in years in Sivan 140 in the sixth thousand." Compare with this an epitaph dated 1641, also dedicated to a famous rabbi and Talmud scholar, the celebrated Rabbi Meir b. Jakob Hakohen Schiff. In the prevailing

taste of the period the diction is lofty or, rather, bombastic. It runs thus: "My friend ascended into the garden like a sun before its time. The righteous man was led away into the house of his dwelling before the Eternal for His pleasure, the Gaon wonderful in understanding and fulness of knowledge. With him what a jewel of priesthood, of the Law, and noble princeliness has vanished from our midst!" In conclusion let two modern epitaphs, a contrast by reason of their simplicity and objectivity be cited. They are of further interest because of the men about whom they tell. The first belongs to one of the Rothschild graves, and runs as follows: "This is Kalman, learned in the Law, son of the departed Amschel Rothschild, learned in the Law. May his memory be a blessing. Died on the first day of the Feast of Weeks, and buried the next day on the second day of the Feast of Weeks 542 of the abridged reckoning (1782). Here is buried a man who from youth up set himself to walk in the way of goodness and righteousness. All his ways and steps were just. He walked humbly before God and men. With his heart turned to heaven he willingly aided his fellowmen and did good quietly and gave secretly to the worthy poor. He also set himself fixed times for the study of the Torah . . . morning and evening . . . with devotion. . . May his soul be bound in the bond of life." The second, dated 1811, celebrates a man who played a leading rôle in the school and cultural affairs of the Jewish community, even though, strange to say, no mention of the fact is made in the inscription. It runs thus: "Here rests

one who strove for perfection, trustee and director of the community, Jacob son of Süsskind Stern, learned in the Law. May his memory be a blessing. He died Sunday and was buried Monday on the 17th of Shebat 571 of the abridged reckoning. He was a man of culture and of distinguished family and one of the leaders of the community. And honor was shown him at his death by a funeral speech made at his grave and by the bestowal upon him of the title of associate. So may his soul be bound in the bond of life."

The writer closes this chapter with the hope that the details he has presented have shown that the old cemetery will provide an interesting and profitable hour to an intelligent, appreciative visitor.

The Rothschild House

CHAPTER XIV

THE ROTHSCHILD HOUSE

The old Judengasse, once the site of the Frankfort ghetto famous throughout the world, and no less infamous for its narrowness and gloom, has for many years not existed even in name. In its place stretches a broad, airy, but undistinguished business street, named for the most noted son of the Frankfort ghetto, Börnestrasse. It begins at the Fahrgasse where stands the house that was formerly the Rothschild bank, a stone building, not particularly attractive, now used for offices of the Jewish community. The street ends at the Börneplatz. The west side is not completely built up with houses, but has a low market-hall looking like a shed to mark the boundary of the street. The east side has a row of uniform houses, broken only by the monumental façade of the chief synagogue, which will be described in a later chapter. In the midst of these prosaic business houses we are struck by an old-fashioned, narrow dwelling, with windows set close together, obviously a relic of times gone by. It is the ancestral home of the Rothschild family.

It is doubly noteworthy. In the first place it was the home of a man who by his prudence, ability, and enterprise succeeded, in stirring times, in founding what was for many decades the richest and most powerful banking business of the world. In the second place its style of architecture and its interior

arrangements give a clear picture of the way men lived in the old Judengasse.

In the year 1770 the young merchant Mayer Amschel Rothschild married Gudula Schnapper, also a native of Frankfort. In 1780 they bought and moved into the house of which we are speaking. But wait! A correction must be made. Mayer Amschel did not acquire the whole house as we now see it.

In the restricted confines of the ghetto the Jews could not live in so spacious a fashion. As a rule the houses had a front of only eight feet. In half the building called the Rothschild house, under one roof with it, as was frequently the custom in the Judengasse, lived a family named Schiff. Its house-sign may still be seen engraved on the keystone of the arch of the door to the right. The door to the left has a red shield on the keystone. When the Rothschild family acquired the house, it had been known as the house of "the green shield" and its name was then changed.

It had been built in the year 1712 after the great conflagration, and, as we now see it, the whole width of the front is about nine or ten meters. The ground floor is of massive stone, required by the building ordinance after that fire. Four round sandstone arches frame four double entrance doors of wood, over which are wrought iron fanlights. These transoms were never missing on any house in the ghetto, for they were needed to admit some daylight. They were not always of artistic wrought iron, but oftener of carved wood. The doors and railings of the Roth-

schild house are of strikingly good baroque work. The keystones of the middle doorways are without ornamentation. The two broader piers next to the middle doors are pierced to accommodate small railed showcases for the display of wares, the universal custom of the ghetto. Upon the ground floor rest two framework stories which project a little, and under them jut out five corbels, of which the three middle ones are adorned with the animal masks so usual in Frankfort. Each of the two stories has six windows crowded close together. Under each window the solid wooden frame is interrupted by a lozenge-shaped space filled in with brick masonry, thus developing in the building material a pretty decoration of the façade to be found on many of the houses of the Judengasse. The lower of the two stories of the gable (*Zwerchhaus*) rising from the roof props, has even more closely crowded windows. The upper has only two windows. The pointed gable swings freely upward as in so many of the burghers' houses in Frankfort. Let us now take a look at the interior. The vestibule is paved with red sandstone flags. Its walls like those of the stairway are painted in blue and white stripes. Directly in front of one of the entrance doors is a wooden trap-door leading to the cellar. Another, a secret door to the cellar is pointed out in the wooden wall of the staircase. At one time there probably was also a door communicating with the neighbor's cellar, as was the case in many other houses of Jews. In times of persecution and danger such a secret way through the cellar afforded a better mode of escape than any other.

The cellar of the Rothschild house is not without importance in the history of the family. From about the beginning of the nineteenth century Mayer Amschel was the court-agent of the very wealthy Landgrave William IX of Hesse-Cassel, and enjoyed his complete confidence. When the Landgrave had to flee in the year 1808, during the Napoleonic war against Prussia, he entrusted the greater part of his fortune to his agent. Mayer Amschel managed the property faithfully and honestly. Most of the money confided to him he concealed in wine-casks in his cellar. Only a few persons knew the secret so that the French were unable to trace the whereabouts of these millions. The prince richly rewarded his loyalty and secrecy, and so the Rothschild house was enabled to undertake a venture that brought them millions of profit and laid the foundation of their enormous fortune. Mayer Amschel and his son Nathan, who had in the meanwhile established a banking house in London, undertook in 1808 to deliver money for the English army fighting the French in Spain, a task refused by every other English house on account of the danger involved. Their ability to undertake this business was due to the great security they were able to offer, since the Landgrave let them have the use of such of his funds as he had deposited in the Bank of England.

From the vestibule, barely lighted by the transoms of the entrance doors, can be seen a compartment separated from the main room by a wire lattice, the kitchen of the house. A small hearth and a pump are still to be seen there. Many a Jewish housewife

must have envied the Rothschilds for the convenience of having water in the kitchen. Most of them had to fetch water from the various wells in the street or at best had a pump in the yard. A door on the right of the kitchen leads into a large room which runs the whole length of the house and gets its light not only from the transom of the front façade but also from several windows looking out upon the yard. It had once been used as a shop. Now it is a waiting room for the poor to whom the Rothschild family regularly gives alms. A door to the left of the kitchen leads into a fairly large room, similarly lighted by several windows opening on the yard. This was formerly the living room of the Rothschilds, but it had to be used also as a bedroom for several members of the family, as was the general custom in the Judengasse, especially when there were many children. The room is now arranged as a synagogue. Evidently the whole ground floor of the two houses with the partition removed belonged to the Rothschilds. The Schiffs must have used the entrance of the next-door house to get to their apartments in the upper stories. Many of the ghetto houses were interconnected in this confused way, sometimes in more complicated fashion.

Before going up to the first floor, let us visit the little courtyard, access to which is not had directly from the hall but from the living room. It is small and narrow. One side is the back wall of the main building, which stands all awry and has more windows crowded in it than the street front. The gable in back is one story higher too. The other three sides

of the yard are enclosed by one-story structures like sheds. While the houses on the west side of the street, where there was more space, almost always had four-story back buildings, there were for the most part none in the yards on the east side, for they were cramped by the ghetto wall. At the time when the Rothschilds bought their house, this wall had fallen into a state of disrepair, and therefore did not cut off light and air as in previous centuries. In a shed in the yard is a small room getting its light from the courtyard, measuring about six square meters. It is not without some distinction in our eyes, for in it we see the first counting-house, the germ so to speak of the House of Rothschild.

Let us leave the little courtyard now and go up to the first story. The entrance stairway with an iron balustrade is not uncomfortable and proves to our satisfaction that the twin houses "*zum Schiff*" (at the sign of the ship) and "*zum grünen Schild*" (at the sign of the green shield) belonged to the better buildings of the ghetto. There were many houses in which the dark, narrow stair, resembling a chicken ladder, had no rail but only a hempen rope at the side, by the aid of which one groped one's way up. Of the rooms in the first story, for many years only two, a back and a front room, belonged to the Rothschilds with all their children. The other rooms were occupied by the Schiff family. The upper stories of the house, containing in all nineteen rooms, had other tenants paying rent. At times, sixty to seventy persons are said to have lived in the two houses at once. This is easy to believe if the other families reckoned as

many children as the Rothschilds. Gudula Rothschild bore eighteen children, of whom five sons and five daughters grew to maturity. After 1812, when Mayer Amschel died, his widow Gudula continued to live in the house alone. The ghetto no longer existed, and Jews were allowed to purchase homes anywhere in the city. The old lady might easily have called a palace beyond the gates of the city her own, for her five sons were heads of what was then the most important banking house in the world, in Frankfort, Vienna, London, Paris, and Naples. But she would have regarded it as sinful to leave the spot which had seen the rise of the family fortunes. She was humble, pious, and modest, and disliked the pride of display. She died in 1849 at the age of ninety-six. The front living room is filled with her spirit. It is arranged practically as it was during her life. There is a daïs by the window where she sat enthroned on a green rep armchair and watched the "busybody" to see whose steps were going along the ghetto street. Around the family table still stand the green upholstered chairs. On the wall covered with a red, figured paper, hang family portraits, notably those of the "five Frankforters," her sons. The simple but well made, white-enamelled wall closet in one corner, in baroque style, always held all sorts of modest titbits, such as the good little hard drop cookies with which she regaled her grandchildren when they came to see her. This wealthy lady lived in great simplicity despite the fact that even in their contracted dwellings luxury of furnishings was not unknown among the well-to-do Jews. We hear of

silken or leather hangings, valuable oil paintings, and all sorts of silver vessels. In the Rothschild home there was nothing of that kind.

The bedroom no longer has articles of its former furniture, but stored in it are some valuable Hebrew books. The adjoining room, to which a door now leads, used to belong to the domain of the Schiffs. The tenants must have passed through it to go to the "booth," used during the Feast of Tabernacles, which they owned in common. This booth was a permanent structure on the balcony or porch or roof-garden. Any one of these names would do for the flat roof of the shed in the yard to which one door of the Rothschild bedroom leads. This flat roof, on which one could sit and snatch a breath of air, must have been a boon to the people confined to the ghetto. After all, our last impression of these restricted quarters is favorable and pleasant.

The other rooms of the house are not open to visitors and are probably devoid of interest.

CHAPTER XV

JUDAICA IN THE LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF FRANKFORT

The public library of Frankfort-on-the-Main possesses an unusual collection of Jewish books and manuscripts in Hebrew and other languages. It is indeed the most valuable on the continent as regards both the number and the rarity of many of the works. The only libraries that boast of greater treasures are the British Museum in London and the Bodleian in Oxford. One need not be a bibliophile to enjoy a stimulating hour in the midst of the rare books and manuscripts there stored up.

Before calling attention to the most noteworthy specimens, it may not be without interest to give a preliminary account of the gradual growth of the Hebrew library. The foundation was laid by the collection of the Arabic scholar Hiob Ludolf, who died in 1704. His heirs were not interested in the numerous Bible editions and grammatical treatises among his remains and presented the city with them. After more than a hundred years, in 1822, a wider range of Hebrew books were added, such as editions of the *Mishnah* and collections of prayers, from the contents of former monastery libraries, into whose possession they had probably come by confiscation. In 1860 there was again a considerable enrichment of the collection by 870 volumes from the remains of Dr. Jost, a former teacher in the Philanthropin. In

1867, 700 volumes were added from the library of Rabbi Aaron Moses, who had died in 1847, his son, Justizrat Fuld, making the gift in memory of his parents. The library, which by now had become distinguished, acquired its great importance through the purchase of the books of Dr. Nehemias Brüll. Upon the death of this scholar, who had for years been rabbi in Frankfort, the city purchased his valuable collection of books, numbering 5,250 volumes, with funds contributed by wealthy donors. Brüll's collection is chiefly distinguished by a wealth of Judeo-German writings, but all other departments of Jewish literary scholarship are represented. In 1899 the library again had a considerable accretion. Professor Berliner of Berlin during his lifetime sold the city 3,200 volumes in his possession, among which was an almost complete collection of Jewish prayer-books, including many different rites of many communities. In the same year, another large addition enriched the library, greatly increased in importance through the purchase of the Berliner collection. The Frankfort rabbi, Dr. Horovitz, aided by self-sacrificing fellow-citizens, presented the library with a large number of costly books and manuscripts. Among them are many so-called Genizah fragments, that is, parts of books that had been buried, including ancient works, some going back to the year one thousand. They had been found in the Cairo cemetery. Such Genizah fragments are to be found in similar completeness only in the great libraries. Two years later, in 1901, another valuable addition was received through the gift of Baroness Mathilde von

Rothschild. This consists of 3,030 volumes, including chiefly rare editions of the Bible, but also a rich selection of Jewish authors. The early part of the twentieth century brought our collection further important increments. Charles Hallgarten, the distinguished Frankfort philanthropist, gave valuable works of literature on the music of the synagogue. Generous gifts of money have enabled the city to buy the remarkably full and valuable collection of Abraham Merzbacher of Munich, containing 6,000 volumes. Another gift of books from a Rothschild consisted mainly of works of Karaite literature, making the library collection of the literature of the Karaites complete. The reader may here be reminded that the Karaites are a Jewish sect which originated in Babylonia and still has adherents in southern Russia, Crimea, Turkey, and Egypt. They are distinguished from the rest of the Jews by the fact that they deny the whole rabbinic tradition. So far as their literature is not written in the Hebrew language, it uses the Judeo-Turkish dialect, which has not yet received thorough scholarly study. If we mention that Professor Berliner bequeathed practically all the rest of his books to the Frankfort library, and that now and again many a single work of great value has been given to it, we have briefly but fully told of the origin and growth of the Hebrew and Jewish section of the library.

A little survey may now be made of the treasures and works worthy of special attention. Let us first look at the incunabula, books printed in the first or "cradle" period of printing. First may be mentioned

a *Ṭur Orah Ḥayyim*, printed in Leira (Portugal) in 1495. It is magnificently printed and illustrated, a joy to anyone who admires the illumination of old books. The collection embraces many other incunabula from Portugal and Spain. Some are printed on parchment, such as a Pentateuch from Lisbon, dated 1491, and a *Maḥzor* (festival prayerbook) according to the rite of the Roman communities of Soncino and Casalmaggiore (1485-86). One of the most valuable incunabula is a *Moreh Nebukim* (Guide to the Perplexed) by Moses ben Maimon. The book is not marked with the year or place of printing, but it must have been put into type before 1480. According to the opinion of a Russian scholar it is the very earliest Jewish book printed. It would take too long to mention the numerous other valuable first printings in our library. The places in which they appeared, whether they were printing offices in Spain, Portugal, Salonica, Constantinople, Venice, or a city of Germany, prove that, wherever there were more or less important communities, the Jews availed themselves promptly of Gutenberg's invention in order to make their religious heritage and the treasures of their intellect accessible to all their coreligionists scattered throughout the world.

The collection of unique examples in our library is also unusual. They too come from many lands. All departments of Jewish literature are represented. Among others, we find a wealth of rituals and collections of prayers. A scholar might here make researches into all the rites that have ever been in vogue anywhere in Jewry. Here we have the festival

prayers of the Catalonian community (Salonica, 1527), the daily prayers of the Aragon communities, and the *Hosha'anot* (prayers with the refrain "save us" used in the *Sukkot* service) of the Sicilian communities of a later date. Rare likewise is a little prayerbook according to the Roman rite (Fano, 1503), of which another copy is to be found in the Vienna Court Library. There is a large collection of prayers in a Hebrew festival prayerbook according to the rite of Aleppo, which is very important for the history of Jewish ritual. Berliner, in whose possession the little book had been, relates that he found it in the attic of a house in the Roman ghetto, where it may have lain under old rubbish, unnoticed, for several centuries. We might mention many another noteworthy collection of prayers, but instead we will rest satisfied with calling attention to several "curiosities;" such as a *Haggadah* from Prague (1717) printed on red paper, and a Spanish prayerbook printed with red type on blue paper in Amsterdam in 1715. Most of these works are delightful to contemplate on account of their precious binding and clasps, even in the case of those of no interest for the rarity of their print.

The Frankfort collection of editions of the Talmud is an extraordinarily rich one. It may almost be called complete. The first printed editions of the Talmud not in the possession of the library are the only ones of their kind in existence. Particularly rare and precious editions of the Bible are, of course, not lacking. It suffices to mention the first rabbinic Bible, printed on parchment at the printing office of

Daniel Bomberg (Venice, 1516-17), and a copy of the Book of Lamentations with commentary by Joel Ibn Shu'aib, printed in Salonica, 1522.

The library has also an unusually large number of works in the Judeo-German jargon, of works that appeared anonymously, etc. In short, no department has been neglected, and there are numerous specimens of books from all places known to have had printing offices, not only in Europe but also in Asia and Africa. Who could even approximately name all the treasures! Space may be taken to tell of a few books of later date that have had a history. There is a booklet in Judeo-German language and characters, published by Michel Gottschalk, Frankfort-on-the-Oder, 1774, which contains 86 octavo pages. The unknown editor remarks in the preface that a new edition of the little work, which had first appeared in 1705, had been forbidden for ten years under threat of the ban. Now more than ten years had passed so that nothing stood in the way of a new edition. Still much that had been in the first edition had been omitted, because in the interval it had appeared in other places, and, again, new material had been incorporated. Another little book, in which can be detected a whiff of the French Revolution, is a treatise published in Berlin in 1792 on a plan to improve the condition of the Jews. It takes the form of a conversation of a king inspired with liberal views with his counsellors. The spokesmen are a clergyman as the opponent and a general as the champion of the Jews. A unique book dating from the Napoleonic era has a remarkable history. It is a

little book by A. Fernando in Italian, printed in Leghorn in 1810, and it deals with a "philosophic project to improve the worship and the politico-moral instruction of the Jews." A. Fernando was first a teacher, and then an office-holder under Napoleon, whom he regarded as the great redeemer of mankind. He hopes that at a time when the surpassing hero is making a new, a better world known, new life may also be infused into Judaism by suitable reforms. Soon after the appearance of this book, which was well-intentioned in its enthusiasm, the Jews denounced it to the Prefect and the Bishop of Leghorn as dangerous to religion, with the request that they should have it examined by experts and prevent the appearance of the second volume. The examination resulted as the plaintiffs wished. The heads of the Jewish community seized the whole edition and burnt it. The one copy that escaped the auto-da-fé was the writer's own, in which were corrections in his hand, the very copy now to be found in the Frankfort library as a unique specimen in the completest sense of the word.

Another curiosity that may be mentioned is a Hebrew calendar of the year 4 of the French Republic, published by Abraham Speier in Metz in 1796. Parallel with the Jewish calendar is the division just introduced into decades instead of weeks. Instead of the holy days, only the festivals of the Republic are given.

As striking as the collection of printed books in our library is the wealth of old manuscripts. Mention has been made of the unique fragments from Egypt

for which the library is indebted to the Frankfort rabbi, Dr. Horovitz. There are other notable treasures. From the Merzbacher collection alone came one hundred and fifty manuscripts, of which twenty are on parchment, dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Some of them are illuminated. Attention should be called especially to an old manuscript of the Bible, dating from the beginning of the thirteenth century, which is adorned with a series of fine full-page pictures. Of later date are a book called "Tidings of the Hussite Wars" and the memoirs of Glückel von Hameln, which, published latterly by Kaufmann, has made its way through the whole Jewish world.

Strictly speaking, the Hebrew-Jewish treasures of the Frankfort library have nothing to do with the story of the Frankfort community. The reader will, however, hardly take it amiss that this occasion has been used to awaken his interest in it. The destiny of the Jews and the intellectual and spiritual life of the Jews are common possessions of all that profess Judaism. What has been suffered and endured in one community and also what has been respected and honored in it are reflected in other communities.

CHAPTER XVI

JEWISH ANTIQUITIES IN THE FRANKFORT HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The collection of Jewish ceremonial and other objects in the Frankfort museum, though it cannot compare in importance with the library, is nevertheless of interest. Some of the things come from the old Judengasse and are therefore closely associated with the Frankfort community. When speaking of the Rothschild house we pointed out that no other house of the ghetto has survived, not even the house in which Börne was born, for his family had not the means to purchase it. It is all the more gratifying that some objects from this very house have been saved for later times and have found a place in our museum.

The collection includes house-signs, doors or parts of doors, such as the iron metal work, knobs, etc., bits of stair-rails, sills, several newel posts and, best of all, specimens of fanlights, such as we have said were never lacking in a ghetto house. Let us first pause to examine the metal work of these transoms, the designs of which vary greatly. The motif is often derived from the house name. One with a pointed arch has an ostrich in the midst of the lattice work. It comes from the house at the sign "of the golden ostrich." Another particularly pretty and ornamental lattice with lovely curving lines has two bears sitting on either side of the mask marking the

central axis, similarly in allusion to the name of the house to which it belonged. Of the iron stair-rails in the museum one comes from the house in which Börne was born. It is developed in free, finely balanced lines, some forming spirals, some ellipses, some fan-shaped designs. Particularly well carried out is the broad, elaborate rosette in the upper part of the middle axis. One of the newel posts comes from the house "of the black bear" and one from that "of the basket." In both the house name is used as the motif. The former has a bear squatting on its hind legs, holding a cartouche; the latter, a lion, also on its hind legs, holding in its paws the symbol of the house, a flat plaited basket. The doors, among them one from the Börne house, are very simple. They display only a modest ornamentation of fluting and flat panels.

There are four house-signs in the collection coming from the houses "of the stork," "of the drum," "of the ring," and "of the green hat." They are not engraved on stone as on the Rothschild house, but on tablets of oak wood, on the average half a meter high and a meter long. These signs belonged to houses on the east side of the street.

Unfortunately there is little furniture in the collection—only a number of wardrobes of various periods. The oldest dates back to the days before the conflagration, the year 1624. It is an architecturally elaborate piece of cabinet work, made of pine wood veneered with dark stained walnut, typical Renaissance furniture. From the baroque period is a large double wardrobe which used to stand in the attic of the

Börne's Birthplace

house "*zum Einhorn*" (at the sign of the unicorn), formerly a Jewish coffeehouse opposite the synagogue. Three other closets, one of which is from the Börne house, are of rococo design. A high oak wood wardrobe in Louis Seize style is also in the collection.

Of the heating arrangements used in the Judengasse are preserved only parts of a small low iron stove dating from the time of the Empire, three cast-iron plates and a base with two figures of Hermes and two plates with the figure of Minerva standing on a trophy. Under this are the words "Solms-Laubacher Offe" (*Ofen* or stove). The front plate is adorned with an allegoric figure of industry, a woman with a shovel, a bee-hive to one side, and over it a little Cupid with a horn of plenty.

Besides these mementos of the life of the Judengasse, the museum has a collection of ceremonial objects of various dates and from various places exhibited in one case. It is not easy to judge the century from which date the vessels used in religious service, as is the case with all objects used in connection with worship, for they are likely to have a traditional shape fixed once for all. Often a dedicatory inscription giving the name and frequently also the dwelling place of the donor as well as the date will establish the period beyond cavil. Should such an inscription be lacking, the age of the object may best be determined by the character of the workmanship, hardly by the outward style.

The collection is recent, for the most part the result of gifts, and it is not comparable in value and variety with the treasures to be found in Paris,

London, Vienna, and elsewhere. There are individual, well-preserved examples that evidence a high degree of artistry. The management of the museum quite properly took the position as to new acquisitions that it would be guided more by artistic quality than by the antiquity of an object.

An attentive examination of the various articles causes the whole religious life of the Jews to pass before our minds as it settled into ritual in synagogue and home in the course of centuries. Let us first study the ceremonial objects belonging to the synagogue. Before us hangs a curtain for the ark made of green velvet and trimmed with gold lace and fringe, used in the synagogue on the last Sabbath of the Jewish month. The inscription embroidered on it is the prayer for announcing the New Moon. The curtain probably comes from Carlsruhe. A married couple from the neighboring town of Durlach is named as the donor. It was given to the synagogue in the year 1808. On either side of the curtain is a bronze candlestick from the Aschaffenburg synagogue. Though their date is 1787, they are of rather antique form. Close by stands a nine-branched brass synagogue candlestick marked with the monogram I.S. and the year 1798. There is a pretty Torah mantle of flowered silk stuff with a red velvet stripe embroidered in gold, preserving the memory of the woman who gave it and telling us that it was made in the year 1767. To both sides of the little Torah mantle, on the back and sides of the case, hang three "wimples" used to wrap the scrolls of the Law. They were given to the synagogue by fathers

who had had their children "carried to *Schul*," as they say in Frankfort, for the first time. These wimples are long strips of linen with Hebrew inscriptions and pictorial designs painted on them or embroidered in silk. As a rule the inscription is a quotation from the Bible with the names of the little boy and his father, the donor of the wimple. Next to the name of the boy, whose first visit to the synagogue usually took place when he was about a year old, stands the stereotyped wish, "May he grow up!" The adornment of the scrolls of the Law with little silver breastplates on chains, etc., was always dear to the hearts of the pious. In our collection there is an admirable example, a pretty plate (*tas*) of chased silver with gilding in rich rococo style. It is not antique, dating back, as the legend shows, only to 1804. Of about the same date is a pointer (*yad*), which likewise served for the adornment of the Torah scroll. The reader used it in the synagogue to point to the words of the text to be read.

Other objects belong to the rites of betrothal and marriage. Under glass is a betrothal contract from Leghorn, dated 1741, which follows an older form. It is written on parchment in very gay colors and has a richly painted decorative border. We recognize the twelve pictures of the animal world, with a trellis over them, and a man and woman clasping hands in front of a tent, and the sacrifice of Isaac. The engagement ring in the case belongs to the antiquities of the synagogue, but, like the document just described, is also linked with private life. It is of a style that happens to be customary in Frankfort, a

broad gold circlet with filigree rosettes, with enamel and studs, set in a little chain link. The inscription on the inner surface expresses the congratulatory wish, "*Mazzal tob.*" The ring was made at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Not only were weddings performed in the synagogue, as is still the custom, but circumcisions also. So it is proper to reckon the knife and the napkins used in circumcision among the ceremonial objects of the synagogue. The collection includes some good examples. The knife handles are made of cut glass with silver inlay or of agate, and like the napkin belong to the eighteenth century. The linen cloth is embroidered in colors in five designs, four symbolic hunting scenes and one of two men carrying a bunch of grapes on a staff. There are no allusions to the purpose of the cloth. Another cloth was used by the priests to dry their hands after the washing by the Levites. This portion of the collection affords no other objects of special interest except several *Megillot* (scrolls of the Book of Esther, read on Purim).

Among the ceremonial articles for the home, the first which we notice is a small *mezuzah*, coming from a house in the Judengasse. The rest are articles used for the consecration of the Sabbath and holidays. We see the usual eight-branched Sabbath lamps, some arranged to hold both candles and wicks for oil. Such lamps were mostly made of brass and had a toothed bar, usually called "saw," by which they could be raised and lowered. The examples in the museum are of this kind. When the Sabbath lamp

is lighted Friday evening the housewife pronounces a blessing upon it. With it Sabbath peace and joy come into the home and into the hearts of the family. Twenty-four hours later the end of the Sabbath is marked with another ceremony. For that are used a small spice box and a dish or plate. The pious like these objects also to be costly and beautiful. Several very pretty spice-boxes are in the collection. One from the end of the seventeenth century is a six-cornered turret-shaped structure, on an elegant base, made of silver filigree. Another, of the eighteenth century, is likewise shaped like a little tower and even has a weather-vane. It is adorned with Bible scenes of silver-enamel work. A third box from the early nineteenth century resembles a censer. A brass dish used for the service at the close of the Sabbath has the shape of a baptismal font of the seventeenth century and is chased with a design representing Adam and Eve under the tree. Much more primitive is a pewter dish for the same purpose. The other trays to be seen in the museum were used for the celebration of the Passover festival on Seder evening. On such a plate would rest the mazzot (unleavened bread), on which in turn would be placed the other symbols conspicuous on the Passover table. One Passover tray of pewter is completely covered with engraved designs. In the middle is a large star with the paschal lamb in the center. Between the eight rays of the star are the figures of Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Pharaoh, and the four sons of whom the *Haggadah* tells. The series of observances for the festival and the names of the former owner and his

wife as well as the date, 1769, are engraved within the rim. On the rim are to be seen representations of Jerusalem and a series of figures which, following the song sung on Seder evening (*Had Gadya*) are supposed to symbolize the transitoriness of everything earthly. The museum possesses also a very valuable Seder tray of silver, noteworthy for the artistic designs on it. It dates back to the last third of the eighteenth century. Other utensils used at the Seder may be seen in the case. A linen cloth embroidered in silk to cover the Seder tray belonged in 1764 to Leah, daughter of Süssle. There are Seder "pockets," too, with three folds to hold the three mazzot to be put on the Seder tray. The pockets are made of fine stuff, velvet or silk, adorned with gold embroidery and gold lace. Here should be mentioned, since they too have to do with the celebration of Passover, six toothed iron forks used in the preparation of the unleavened bread, a most interesting curiosity. They used to belong to a family that had lived in Frankfort for centuries, and are of a shape used here as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century.

One other Jewish festival requires the use of special ceremonial vessels, Hanukkah (Feast of Dedication), and a Hanukkah lamp is part of the household equipment of every observant Jew. The museum has a small assortment of such lamps. One of them, probably made toward the end of the sixteenth century, deserves especial attention. It is of green glazed earthenware with eight little receptacles for oil. On each end of the back of the lamp is a little

socket for a small candle. The back and sides are decorated with pressed designs representing angels and, repeated three times, a pair of lovers with the inscription "Amor." It is a very worldly sort of decoration without the least relation to the nature of the festival.

Into the midst of these ceremonial objects has wandered one profane work of art, a brass seal, engraved in the eighteenth century, perhaps by a Jewish engraver. At all events it has been proved that there were Jewish seal-engravers in Frankfort. This seal rests on two raised hands touching a crown, and according to the inscription it belonged to one Meir, son of Salman Schiff.

In conclusion, we may say that our collection shows that, however oppressed the Jews were, however they lived apart, cut off from all that went on outside their own world, yet they were always able to celebrate their public and private feasts, to observe their hours of devotion, and find pleasure in lending grace to their ritual by using for it objects of artistic beauty.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SYNAGOGUES

With the synagogues of Frankfort we bid adieu to the past. The old places of worship in which the ghetto-dwellers passed their hours of devotion are no more. The buildings to which we now bend our steps are all modern. We will pay no attention to the various smaller houses of prayer in which a part of the large Jewish community of Frankfort satisfies its religious needs and will occupy ourselves only with the four most important synagogues.

Let us remain in the neighborhood in which the Judengasse used to lie, on the Börnestrasse, which opens on a square called the Börneplatz. In this part of the city are two synagogues. The simpler of the two is situated on the Börneplatz close to the old cemetery. It is an exceedingly plain building, easily overlooked, not distinguished by any special peculiarities, built in the years 1881-82 after the plans of the architect Kutznitzky and under his supervision. The exterior of the synagogue reveals the preference for Renaissance styles that prevailed in those years. The façade, of red Main sandstone, shows Renaissance forms simplified to the greatest possible degree. A cupola emphasizes the southwest corner of the building, where the staircase is.

The interior was kept as simple as the outside. The nature of the site, next to the old cemetery, required a practically four-square plan. This shape, which is

consequently that of the bright, wide hall for prayers which we are entering, is conducive to simplicity and enables us to get a clear view of it as a whole. Only the east end, where the services are conducted, is marked off by an arched apse. Behind this apse, at the same height as the broad, open galleries for the women which run along the three outer sides, is a place for the choir. There is no organ in this synagogue, in which the traditional service is followed. Ornamentation is used most sparingly. Nothing should distract the worshipper from his devotions. Besides the main hall the building contains a synagogue for weekly services, used also for weddings. The corresponding room on the first floor serves as a meeting place for the board.

To reach the chief synagogue of the Frankfort community we must walk back a little way. One façade of this building faces on the Börnestrasse; the other on the Allerheiligenstrasse. This synagogue may be said to stand on historic ground. The site had always been used for the house of prayer of the Frankfort community, both for the very old synagogue and for the one erected after the fire of 1711. We have told how the first care of the community was to see their house of God rise again from the ruins, and how young and old wished to put their hands to the work and gave the laborers extra pay for the privilege of helping. But not the least vestige remains of this old synagogue. All we have are several pictures of it. The new chief synagogue was built in the years 1855-60 by the architect Johann Georg Kayser. Since then the interior decorations

have been renovated twice, but the structure itself has not been modified. The two chief façades are built of red sandstone. The side toward the narrow synagogue alley is plastered. The view of the exterior at once produces a strong effect. The building is massive, serious, solid, a true citadel of God. It is really quite inconceivable that a newspaper reporter, describing the dedication in the year 1860, should have spoken of its "elegant architecture" and called it a "charming temple."

When we examine the outside of the building carefully, we find that use was made of architectural designs of most heterogeneous origin. We have ogee arches, horseshoe arches, Tudor arches, Moorish tracery, etc. The building was erected when great confusion of taste prevailed in Germany. It speaks well therefore for the excellence of the whole plan that despite this the building produces a strong unified impression. The main façade is designed in a perfectly symmetrical manner. Two stair towers, projecting slightly forward, each crowned by a main cupola and four smaller cupolas, frame the massive central wall, which has a gable end that ascends step-fashion and is richly ornamented. The surface of the middle part is divided horizontally by a prominent cornice. Above this cornice and directly over the main entrance is the large middle window from which the interior gets most of its light. It ends in an ogee arch, with a wealth of moldings. The main doorway is handled as a unit. Like the stair towers, it juts out slightly and harmonizes with the great middle window above in its shape and in the tracery in relief

over the actual opening. On the two sides of the main door in the stair towers are the entrances to the women's portion of the synagogue. On the whole, the eastern façade on the Allerheiligenstrasse has the same construction as that just described, except that it is simpler. The side toward the synagogue alley, on which there is an entrance to the women's portion, is unimportant.

Having allowed the massiveness and solidity of the exterior to make their full impression, let us enter by the main doorway. We find ourselves in a sort of vestibule separated from the middle space by three arches. Above is the vaulted ceiling supporting the choir gallery. We stand facing the east wall with the ark for the scrolls of the Law, and look down the main aisle. This part is unusually free in its execution. Over it is a tunnel-vault divided in half by a binding-arch. The two side aisles are low and have flat transverse tunnel-vaults, on which rest the two-story arcades of the women's portion. In all, each side has four horseshoe arches, as do the arcades of the first gallery, whereas the second gallery has double that number of arches. The arches are carried on smooth grey marble columns with flowered capitals. The same stone is used for the steps that lead up to the platform with the sacred ark, for the table at which the portion for the week is read, and for the balustrade enclosing it. Grey is indeed the color of the background for the wall decoration. A happy effect is produced by painting the inner curves of the arches and the friezes with a discreet checker-board design of various shades of grey. It

might be feared that so much grey would make the interior merely cool and neutral, but the effect is restful. Monotony is avoided by the wise use of other colors in the side naves, the walls of which are a delicate blue, while the ceilings are blue and gold. The vaulted ceiling of the main aisle has circular ornaments on which the prevailing color is a dull yellow.

Now that we are somewhat at home in this large auditorium, let us examine the east end, the most important part of the synagogue. The ornamentation of the apse-like eastern wall is in both color and form far more elaborate than the rest of the synagogue. For its center it has the holy ark built into the middle of the wall and made of white marble, the gleam of which dominates the whole interior. Above it, two niche-like carvings in the shape of the tables of the Law and above them a small rose window lay further stress upon the significance and importance of this part of the structure.

The rest of the rooms, such as the weekday synagogue, are devoid of architectural interest.

The third synagogue to which we now take our way lies in an entirely different part of the city, in the quarter of elegant villas. Far from the bustle of business streets, in ample, restful, green surroundings, stands the new West End Synagogue, the work of the architect Franz Röckle. It was dedicated on September 28, 1910.

Before us rises a large complex group of buildings. The façade of grey shell-limestone harmonizes admirably with the reddish roof covered with interlocking

tiles. A low stone wall topped with trimmed yew encloses the grounds. The plan of the group does not become clear at sight, but before long the skilful articulation of the different wings becomes clear. The synagogue lot is bounded by three streets. A broad front faces the Altkönigstrasse. The main entrance is on the Königsteiner Strasse. The community house, with the rabbi's dwelling, etc., is connected with the synagogue at this point, having its narrow end facing on the Friedrichstrasse. Disregarding this community house, we perceive that the plan of the synagogue is clear and simple, being square with a central dome. Three sides project forward somewhat and are lengthened in front by shallow gabled vestibules. In front of the main entrace is a small but striking entrance hall surmounted by a cupola. The structure is entirely modern, simple, serious, and dignified. Pilasters divide the surfaces vertically, and the only decoration of the gable ends are heraldic lions, holding the symbols of the Jewish faith, the tablets of the Law and the shield of David.

The architect could with good conscience dispense with the mosque-like portions of the building, which had hitherto usually distinguished the exteriors of synagogues. They have only an extrinsic connection with Jewish life and that merely because of their oriental origin. In the interior we shall see that Jewish tradition has been more happily conserved by the use of Egyptian and Assyrian designs, for it may possibly be assumed that architecture in Palestine was always influenced by that of its powerful neighbors.

Through the low-domed entrance hall, the pilasters of which remind us of old oriental temples, we enter a courtyard with a running fountain, which at once has a soothing effect and prepares the spirit for the peace and consecration of the house of prayer. Three high black doors, framed by four pillars, lead into the synagogue proper.

The general impression is so strong that at first details are blotted out. Subdued light, finding its way from the windows below and above the galleries envelops us, and through it positively gleams the yellowish-white marble of the holy ark. The eye then seeks the dome, which curves upward with a light yet vigorous sweep, enlarging the space above and giving it character. The lower rim is broken by a great number of small lozenge-shaped windows. The colors are subdued yet radiant. From the apex of the crown, about thirty-five meters high, hangs the chandelier, its bulbs arranged in concentric circles, each smaller than the one above it. It is made of bronze, with pendants of iridescent glass that marvellously increase the effectiveness of the light.

The dome rests on four powerful arches. On three sides they span the galleries which project considerably into the main space. The eastern arch frames the chancel, on which the ceremonies of the ritual are conducted. On each side two low heavy pillars, which support the north and south galleries, divide as it were the side naves from the central part. The west gallery at the same end as the main entrance is supported by four pairs of pillars so that on entering

one stands in a sort of lobby. All the pillars are made of yellowish-grey marble, fluted and having leafy capitals in harmony with Assyrian and Egyptian patterns. The pylon-like form of the door-frames even in the vestry rooms carries one's fancy back to the past of oriental peoples.

Grey and yellow marble in geometric designs covers the walls to about the height of the galleries. Broad vigorous lines of ornamentation, the blue of which is deepened by light green and the brown shot through with gold, bring out the structural lines of the joints and arches and follow the rails of the galleries. Only in the east end, to which all looks are directed, where the rabbi preaches, where the weekly portion of the Torah is read, are the colors brightened to white. The architect has made the ark for the scrolls, to which carpeted steps lead, particularly beautiful. It is flanked by two pillars on each side and has a bronze door with ornamentation of original design. A plush curtain with heraldic lions on it conceals the door. The choir stall is over the ark, and on each side, like wings, are disposed the organ pipes.

We might mention many more admirable features of the beautiful structure, but we must leave this consecrated place. A hall, less severe in style, making a more cheerful impression, leads to the weekday synagogue, which is decorated in particularly charming tones of color and style of ornamentation. All the other rooms are finely and worthily conceived and executed. We leave this house of God in elevated mood.

One more synagogue is worth visiting. It is perhaps the most beautiful and individual Jewish house of prayer in Frankfort. It is located in the eastern part of the promenades that girdle with their green the old, central part of the city of Frankfort, near the Friedberger park. It is the work of Jürgensen and Bachmann, architects from Charlottenburg, and was built by them in the years 1905-1907. No slight task was set the artists, for the plot of ground at their disposal was scarcely adapted to the development of a work of monumental style, since it presented only a narrow front to the street and had great depth. It was also necessary to keep the synagogue in a perfect west to east direction, whereas the street leading to it makes an acute angle with that line. These restrictions, which it might be thought would cramp the imagination of the architects, on the contrary gave it wings.

The building we see is not only well constructed, suited to its purpose, finely proportioned, and elegant in design, but it makes a strong appeal to the emotions and has great poetic charm.

Let us stand on the broad promenade of the park and look at the building across the street. It stands back at a slant with an open court in front of it. Two grated doors with round arches over them separate this space from the street and the trivialities of the workaday world. The court in front is not only a happy solution of all architectural difficulties but at the same time it is a link with old oriental Jewish traditions. For, even though as we have said there has never been a definite synagogue style, yet in

Synagogue near the Friedberger Park

olden times stress was always laid on a spacious court in front of the synagogue.

The court is of an irregular four-cornered shape, resulting from the fact that its west side runs with the street front and so makes an acute angle with the front of the synagogue. The two low wings, in which are rooms for board meetings and other purposes, are, in consequence, of dissimilar length. It is precisely this irregularity, forced by outward conditions, which lends the structure such great charm. One who has walked through the Frankfort parks by the light of the full moon and has suddenly seen across the driveway the white splendor of the gleaming synagogue among the good citizens' houses, will never forget the sight. The building loses none of its charm in broad daylight. On the contrary, the discriminating observer sees its good features all the more easily.

To give the synagogue characteristic style, the Charlottenburg architects made as little application of the previously used forms of the mosque as the builder of the West End Synagogue, but they did not avail themselves of Egyptian and Assyrian motifs. They went back rather to the forms of the early Middle Ages with weak echoes of Byzantine and oriental modes. This synagogue is the place of prayer for the adherents of the strictest traditional type of Judaism, a group that separated from the great community to form the *Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft*. It is therefore necessary to bear in mind that there must be no use of images of living beings or of symbolic representations. It is astound-

ing to see the wealth of ornamental designs that give life to the building, despite, or, perhaps, because of this limitation.

Let us enter the court and examine the outside of the building. The front may be characterized as a gable structure with two low square towers. These towers are particularly original in conception with narrow lengthwise flutings. At the top are small cupolas resting on low stone rails looking as if they hovered in the air. There is something mysterious about them, an air of unreality, which charms the fancy. The gable of the central portion of the front is adorned with a large but very simple rose window, which is somewhat veiled by elegant little stone pillars resting on small consoles, a pretty architectural device. Above the rose window are seen small arched windows, with little pillars between, which are graceful but not trifling, a reminiscence of both Rome and the Orient.

In front of the façade is a small vestibule with two heavy imposing entrance doors. We enter and find ourselves in the entrance hall to the space reserved for men. The grey color of the shell-limestone, the building material of the front exterior, is preserved in the interior decoration, and is enlivened by deeply chiseled designs of the utmost variety. The special ornament of this hall is a marble fountain of charming design.

And now we expectantly enter the synagogue proper. Our expectations are exceeded by the restfulness and perfect harmony of the effect. The building appears as a rectangle with three naves. Heavy

pillars separate the sides from the central nave. These pillars are joined by arches which support the women's galleries. The galleries are reached directly from the street by doors on both sides of the two gates of the courtyard. Transverse vaults form the ceilings of the galleries. A particularly striking feature is the wrought iron lattice which, in accordance with old custom, shuts off the women's synagogue from the men's, but which does not interfere with the view of the structure as a whole. The appearance of the auditorium from the west gallery is of extraordinary charm. The skilful arrangement of the windows permits the beauty of the architectural forms to show by daylight, and the festive illumination for the evening service reveals them equally. The grey color of the surfaces does not produce a monotonous effect, thanks to the ornaments, which without overloading cover them with a profusion of designs and fittingly stress the architectural lines. The circular ornaments on the vaulted ceiling are in part disguises for the ventilator opening. The closer the approach to the ark the richer the ornamental design. The sacred ark is framed in reddish-brown Nassau marble and closed with bronze doors. The curtain before it is of costly silk stuff interwoven with gold and silver. Two large candelabra flank the shrine, true pillars of light set with marble pilasters encrusted with semi-precious stones. On both sides shine costly Hanukkah and *Berit Milah* lamps.

In this synagogue, in which the service is conducted strictly in accordance with tradition, the chief altar, the *almemar*, does not stand near the east

end but in the middle of the auditorium. It is made of white Scyros marble with metal inlay and flanked on four sides by candelabra.

The circuit we have made of the synagogues of Frankfort has no doubt rewarded us, even if hitherto we have not discovered in ourselves any special interest in architecture, for these buildings have such charm that even the layman must find pleasure in seeing them. The Frankfort synagogues embody in worthy fashion the traditions of the famous old Frankfort community.

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